NINTENDO POWER

Sonic Colors Guitar Hero: Warriors of Rock Madden NFL 11 Batman: The Brave and the Bold de Blob: The Underground Retro City Rampage

256

JULY 2010

SUBSCRIBER EDITION

Wii™

TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB

Fantasy Violence

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nintendo Wi-Fi connection

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"NONSTOP ACTION." -1UP.COM

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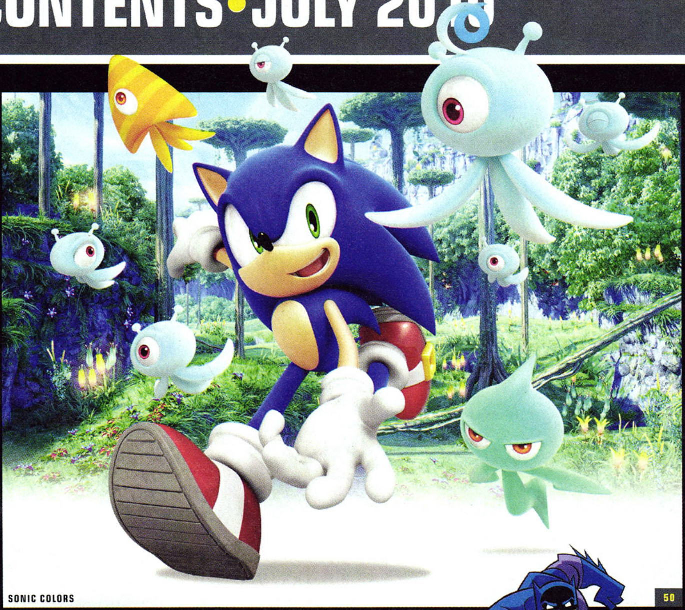

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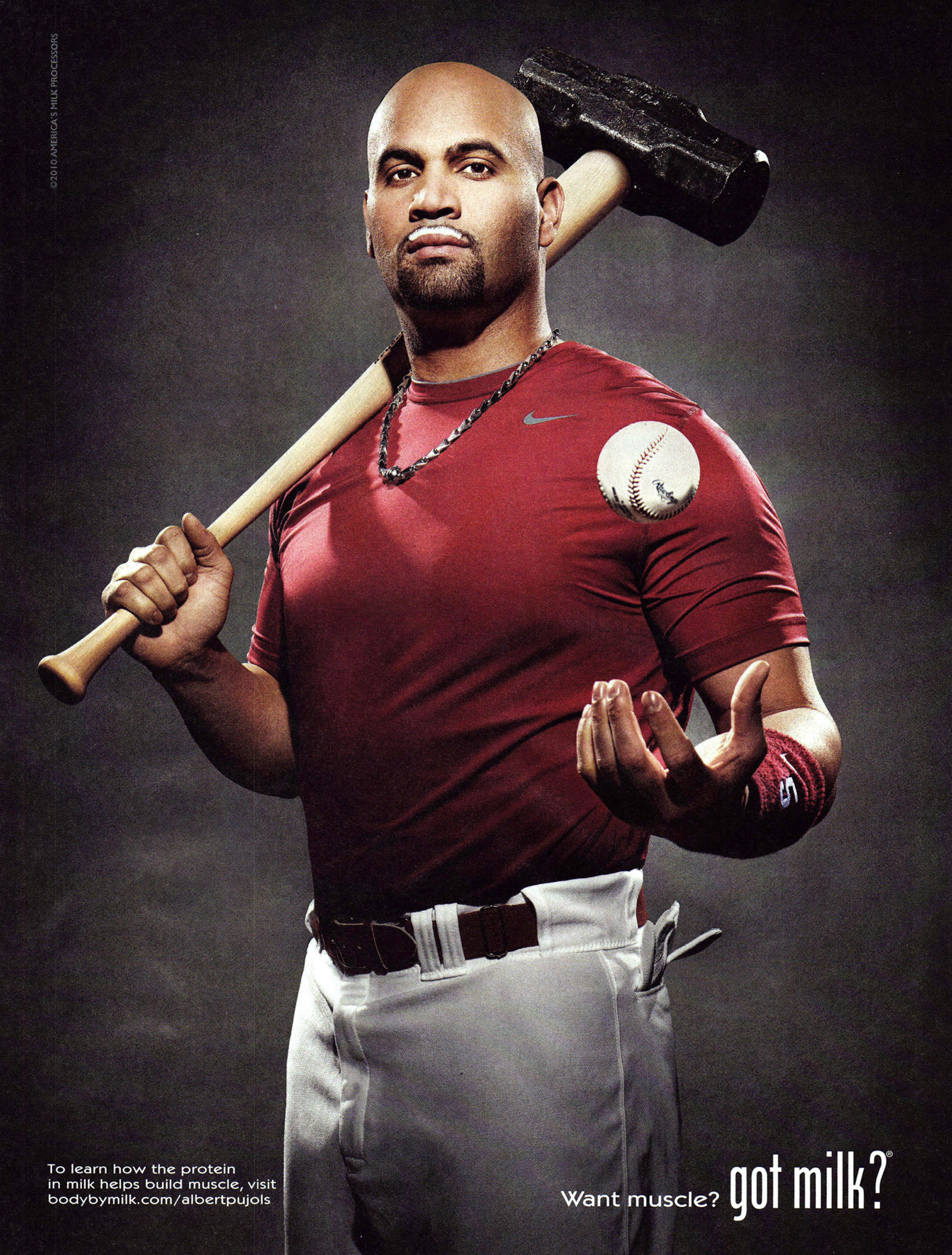
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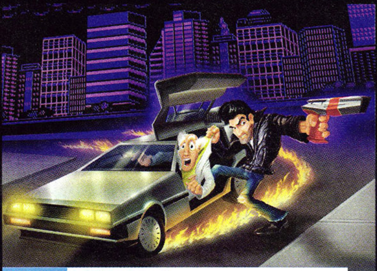
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DS = NINTENDO DS
DW = DSiWARE
NES = NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM
VC = VIRTUAL CONSOLE
Wii = Wii
WW = WiiWARE

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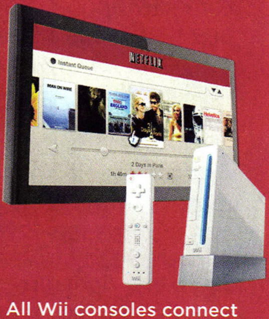

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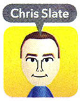
Pulse

High on the 'Hog



I enjoyed my Sega Genesis a lot as a kid, but when it came to choosing sides between the Sega and Nintendo camps at school, I was firmly in Mario's corner. (Big surprise, right?) Maybe that's why, unlike others here at NP, I was never a huge Sonic fan. Strangely, though, I've grown to really like the character while watching him struggle. In analyzing his recent missteps and hearing the impassioned pleas from his many fans, I've come to appreciate the qualities that made his best games so good: strong platforming, brilliant level design, edge-of-your-seat thrills, and a focus on great action without gimmicky distractions. It seems that the makers of the amazing-looking Sonic Colors feel the same way, and are ready to move the series in the right direction at long last. For the first time in my life, I absolutely cannot wait to play a Sonic game.

CHRIS SLATE **EDITOR IN CHIEF**

Wii
MARIO ROCKS!
NINTENDO POWER
SLAY ZOMBIES
VIDEO GAMES PREDICT THE FUTURE
METROID: OTHER M
SUIT UP

V255 JUNE 2010

Chris Slate here, back once again to answer your letters while grinding along spiraling space rails and showing a lot of attitude. But first, this month's special letter request: how would you turn Nintendo's heroes into villains and vice versa? Send your responses to the address on page 8, and we'll print the best ones!

LETTERS

While I appreciate every letter and email that you guys send in, many of them aren't signed. It's gotten so bad that I'm afraid punishments are in order. This month, every anonymous letter will be credited to one of history's worst video game characters. This hurts me more than it does you; please remember to include your name from now on.

Friends and Enemies

It would be fun if you started something like a one-page Enemy of the Month section. It could include both major or minor characters, maybe even some that barely count as enemies. Too many people don't even know the names of a lot of classic characters! —**ALT**

Great minds think alike, Alt! As you'll see in this month's revamped news section (now called Power Up—see page 10), we're introducing a new monthly column called Star Power that will spotlight a different character every issue. We'll feature heroes as well as villains, from famous faces to cult favorites. Write in and let us know who you'd like to see get the Star Power treatment!

The Big Three-Oh

I'm sure you guys at Nintendo Power know that Mario is turning 30 next year, right? Nintendo should do something cool to commemorate the plumber's big milestone, and I'm definitely leaning toward a theme park. Just imagine riding a huge Bullet Bill roller coaster, playing games in an underground pipe arcade, and racing friends in real-life Mario Kart competitions! Ol' Mario deserves more than a cake for his next birthday. —**NINTENDOFREAK247**

A Perfect Match

My first experience with tennis was Mario Power Tennis for Nintendo GameCube. I joined my high school tennis team because of that game, and now I play it and Wii Sports Tennis daily to hone my real-life skills. Thanks, Nintendo! You inspired me to try something I normally wouldn't do, and it changed my life for the better.
—**NUMBER 12**

Not only can Mario teach you tennis, but you can pick up tips for dealing with turtles, too!

In your article called "The Future is Now," I was delighted to see a showcase of games in which the years have caught up with the timelines they depict. But you left out a favorite game of my brother and I: Crystalis. According to its story, an extensive war led civilization to nearly destroy itself on October 1, 1997! —**HEIDI**

THE FUTURE IS NOW

Video games love to give us a peek at what's going to happen in the future. Eventually, however, the future catches up.

IN THE YEAR 1995 METAL GEAR

IN THE YEAR 1999 THE KRION CONQUEST

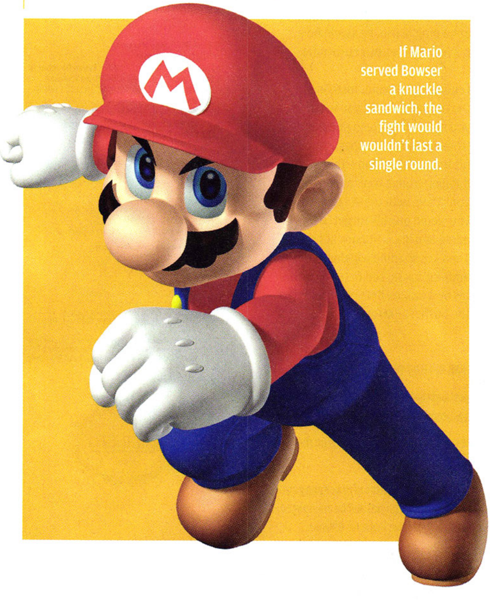
Mario Pulling Punches?

Why can't Mario punch in most of his games? Is he too much of a *sissy* to punch? —**BIG THE CAT**

Sissy? Are you *kidding* me? Mario is the only video game hero who could beat the boss and save the girl with both hands *literally* tied behind his back. If he threw the full fury of his fists at Bowser's Koopa cronies, the game would be over way too fast!

Danadanadana

You know how, in the 3-D Zelda games, you have that battle music that plays whenever an enemy is near? ("Danadanadanadana....") Well, what if different instruments accompanied the song when you fought different enemies? For example, a Skulltula would add a plucked string instrument, a Darknut would add percussion, etc. Then, when you fought a combination of foes, it would be like an entire symphony! —**JAYSON H.**



If Mario served Bowser a knuckle sandwich, the fight would wouldn't last a single round.

Is Silence Golden?

Are you guys for or against Samus speaking in Metroid: Other M? And if you're for it, do you think other Nintendo characters should speak? —**UNJUSTIFEDLEAK**

Personally, I'm excited to hear Samus speak. I think that the Metroid style of gameplay—with its moody, cinematic atmosphere and rich backstory—will be even more compelling with a deeper story. And since that story focuses on Samus, I think it would be distracting if she were inexplicably mute. Conversely, I don't think it matters much that Link doesn't talk since the stories in the Zelda games never focus on him. Mario has never needed a big story, and if he said more than the occasional *yahoo* or *yippee*, his games would start to feel like a kid's cartoon and lose their ageless appeal. That's my two cents, anyway.

Marvelous Mysteries

I love how Nintendo games leave mysteries for fans to solve with their imagination. Like, why is Mario's mustache a different color than his hair? And why are Yoshis already wearing boots and a saddle when you hatch them? Mysteries such as these don't frustrate me, but make me love the awesome game company called Nintendo! —**SUPERDUDE6**

DON'T HASSLE THE HOFF

One day on the bus, my friend and I were talking about The Legend of Zelda and he called Zelda Princess Leia! I said, "what?!" He meant to say Zelda, and that made me think that, instead of giving the space theme to Super Mario Galaxy, Nintendo should make The Legend of Zelda Galaxy. —**JAKE M.**

The Hoff says: I'll do you one better: what if Link actually *was* looking for Princess Leia? Instead of being accompanied by Navi, Link would be joined by a holographic Admiral Ackbar, who would tell him "It's a trap!" whenever danger was near. Epona would be a tauntaun instead of a horse; if Link got too low on health, he could slice open her gut and hop inside to restore his strength. (Um, that'd work only once per game.) And just imagine the look on Link's face when he learns that Ganon's his father and thus he's actually one-half giant blue pig-man. Oh, and Boba Fett gets eaten by a Lanmola.

It would be fun to see Yoshi in The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess. Forget Link's wolf form; a flutter-jumping dinosaur is the way to go! Can Epona eat her enemies? Nope. You could call Yoshi by playing the Super Mario Bros. theme song. **—KARNOV**

What non-Mario video games would it be fun to see Yoshi appear in?

It would be funny if Yoshi appeared as an F-Zero machine. Racers could ride on him like Mario does, but he would have a permanent Dash Pepper speed boost. The other competitors would have to be careful not to trail Yoshi after he's eaten a bowl of prunes. **—KEITH COURAGE**

The best Yoshi cameo would be in an Ace Attorney game. Yoshi would be sick of Player One dropping him into pits to gain an extra boost, and would take him to court. "Objection! What is this I hold in my hand, Player One? Could it be the controller you used to ditch poor Yoshi?" **—MINIFAN**

I would probably pick Resident Evil. Imagine that you are about to steal a bike to evade zombies, when you turn and spot Yoshi sitting there. Of course, you wouldn't be able to choose Yoshi and he'd eventually be mauled by zombies.... **—GOREY**

Yoshi would be awesome as a town resident in Animal Crossing. He could fill in for Zipper on Bunny Day and reward you for finding buried Yoshi eggs. **—GEOZELDADUDE**

Imagine Yoshi on stage in Guitar Hero performing a crazy solo! **—TITUS THE FOX**

Yoshi should be in Call of Duty! It might sound crazy, but it would be awesome. Once you get 10 kills without dying, you could call Yoshi in to ride on his back and he could swallow people for instant kills. Plus, it would be cool to see Yoshi decked out in military gear and camo. **—AMAGON**

Imagine this awesome scenario: Kirby is participating in an eating contest, thinking he's a shoo-in to win the championship, when a new challenger appears: Yoshi! **—JOSEPH G.**

What if Yoshi was in Tetris as an item? You'd have a bunch of blocks stacked up, and *bloop*—Yoshi's tongue would wipe them all off the screen. **—AL P.**

I would put Yoshi into a new Wii Sports Resort event where your Mii could ride him just-a-like Mario does all around the island! **—RAGDOG**

It would be cool if 5th Cell could include copyrighted nouns in the next Scribblenauts so that Yoshi would appear when you wrote his name. You could ride him around and tap him to swallow hazards. Say your prayers, bank robber! **—CHUBBY CHERUB**

A cameo in Punch-Out!! would be cool—Yoshi could hit Little Mac with his tongue! **—DINO RIKKI**

Star Wolf could kill off Slippy and Yoshi could take his place in Star Fox. If Yoshi could do as good a job at being Fox's wingman as he does at helping Mario, he would be a perfect fit. **—SEPULTURAFAN**

I choose Duck Hunt. Instead of the dog laughing at you when you miss, Yoshi could pop out from behind the bushes, shoot his tongue at an apple that's hanging from a tree, and fire it at you! Then, with the Wii Remote, you would quickly target the apple and knock it back at him! Then Yoshi would wiggle his nose and—embarrassed to be hit with his own apple—hide back behind the bushes. **—MICHAEL P.**

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TIPS FOR GETTING YOUR LETTER PUBLISHED:

Understand that the magazine staff is separate from Nintendo; we don't make the games.

Don't send links to game coverage on the Web—trust us; we see it all.

Don't ask about the status of upcoming games, or whether certain games will be announced; if we have that info, we'll always tell you.

NINTENDO POWER

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What Nintendo fans think, want, and do

The SCORE

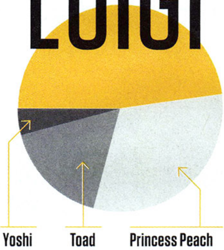
WEIGH IN ON NEXT MONTH'S TOPICS AT WWW.NINTENDOPOWER.COM/POLLS.

3-D MARIO WINS!

56% of you think that 3-D Mario games are better than 2-D Mario games

Who do you think deserves a new game?

LUIGI

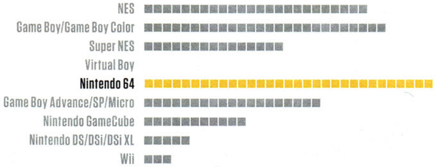


40%

of you think that Sonic was best on Genesis.

17%	on Wii
15%	on Nintendo GameCube
13%	on Sega Dreamcast
10%	on Game Boy Advance
5%	on Nintendo DS

WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST SYSTEM?



GANON IS GAMING'S BIGGEST JERK

Ganon 32% • King Dedede 19% • Bowser 17% • Ridley 12% • Dr. Robotnik 10% • Dr. Wily 10%

WHEN YOU PLAY A GAME IN THE LEGEND OF ZELDA SERIES, WHAT DO YOU NAME LINK?

"LINK"

68% 32%

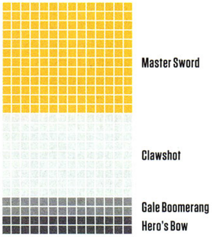
[OTHER NAME]

IF OFFERED THE CHOICE,

8 OUT OF 10

OF YOU WOULD ACTUALLY CHOOSE A NINTENDO 3DS (WITH LAUNCH GAMES) OVER HEAT VISION (A SUPERPOWER)

Which of Link's items would you most like to have FOR REAL?



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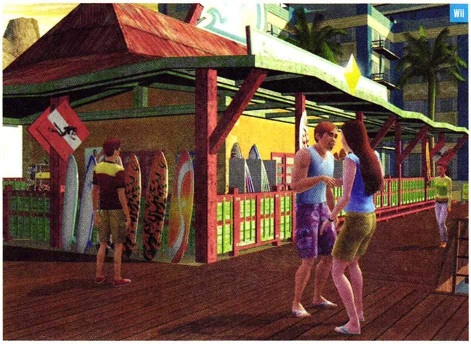
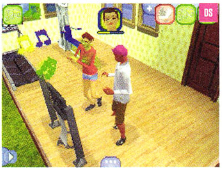
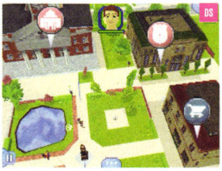






Get a Life

The Sims 3 hits Wii and DS—and it's no cut-down PC port.

EA'S CHART-SMASHING, free-time-devouring life simulation The Sims 3 is coming to the Wii and Nintendo DS systems–and, for the first time, the series isn't being shoehorned into a scaled-back experience for the console market. In fact, it'll have features the PC original didn't.

The Wii version of the game has an all-new locale for your Sims to call home: a sunny seaside town, complete with an ocean to swim in and docks where you can build a houseboat. (That's new, too.) As in the PC version, all of the Sims in the game–including yours–will have unique traits, desires, needs, and goals. Want to strive to be a five-star chef or a mad scientist? It's all up to you, as is your Sim's overall appearance (created using a robust editor). Those features and traits will be passed along through multiple generations for the first time in the series, and, in another first, you'll use the Control Stick on the Nunchuk controller to move your Sim directly.

The game's designers are also taking a new approach to one of the hallmark features of the series: building houses. Rather than making you construct them entirely, you'll have a wide array of preset exteriors to choose from, in a variety of architecture styles from art deco to whimsical. How does a tree house strike you? Additionally, you can build more than one story for your home–again, a new feature. Inside the home, everything's fair game thanks to a massive catalog of objects and furnishings to purchase with the Simoleons your Sims earn on the job.

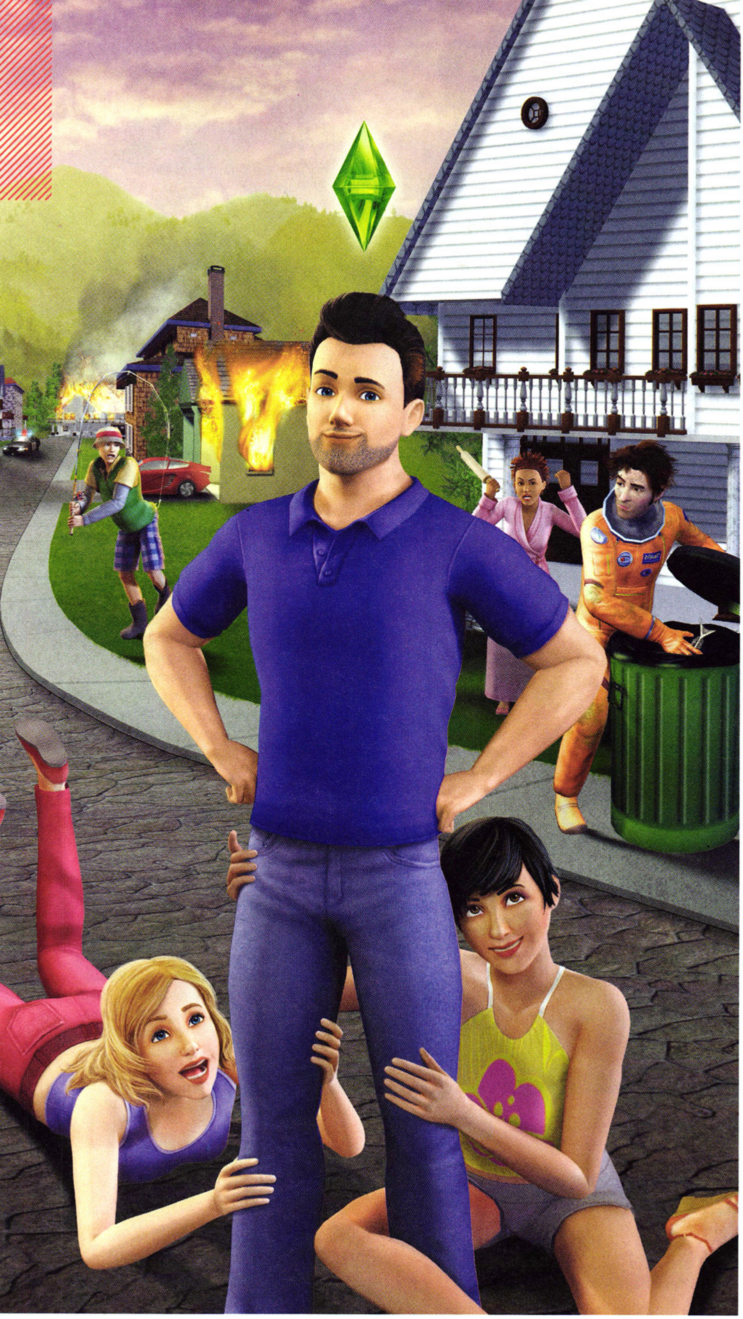
Two more big additions are in store for the Wii version: Karma Powers and a unique multiplayer mode. Karma Powers will be earned as your Sims reach life goals; the powers give you a number of ways to mess with your creations. (One power, for instance, zaps all their stats to zero, and another makes everyone fall in love with them. There's even one that makes all the Sims don their birthday suits.)

In multiplayer, up to four people grab a Wii Remote controller and play through an accelerated Sim life cycle by simply choosing how to react to situations presented onscreen. It's almost like a game show, with players betting on what their opponents will choose to do, and all successes and failures add up to determine an ultimate winner. (Sure, there are options to team up in certain situations, but you can't rightfully expect a player who's decided to be evil to do that.)

The Sims 3 for DS is the first fully featured Sims game on the handheld, encompassing character creation, home building, and all of the goal-driven gameplay of its console sibling. It even sports a fully 3-D game world, with the ability to build your dream home using the stylus.

Sims may be little virtual people, but we have a feeling both of these games will go over big with real people when they arrive this fall.

—RANDY N.



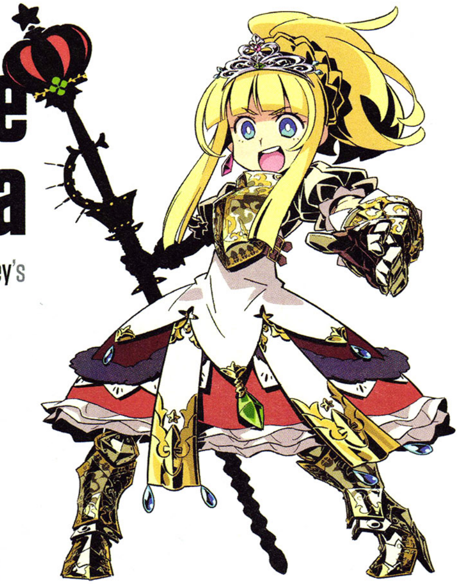
Chris Slate

Welcome to Our New Section!

Although these pages may not immediately look much different than before, there are quite a few changes in store for what was formerly known as News. The first thing you're likely to notice is the section's new title. What does "Power Up" mean? If it makes you think of the name of our magazine, "turning on" the issue, boosting your knowledge of the Nintendo world, or even classic power-up items such as Super Mushrooms, then you're right—it stands for all of those things. We'll still report on events and big announcements here, and provide first peeks at new games, but you can also expect much more. We've packed in plenty of new recurring columns, made room for a broader range of articles, and expanded the section to be a more important part of what we offer each month. We hope you enjoy the new approach; be sure to let us know what you think!

Devils and the Deep Blue Sea

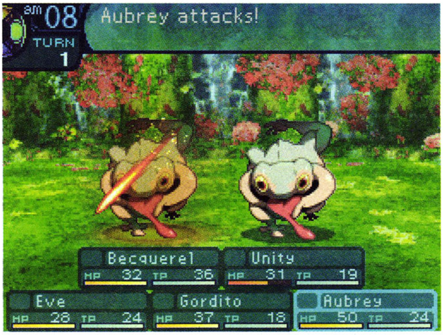
Watery graves join the normal variety in Etrian Odyssey's punishing new chapter.



IN CASE THE grueling dungeon crawls of Etrian Odyssey I and II haven't snapped your DS stylus and shattered your spirit, a third installment is coming to finish the job. Scheduled to ship this fall, Etrian Odyssey III: The Drowned City promises another new 25-level Yggdrasil Labyrinth crawling with deadly "F.O.E." monsters. But it also offers a few surprises, including a dozen entirely new classes and multiplayer Oceanic Quests that allow players to turn their touch-screen mapping talents toward the vast ocean that surrounds the hub city of Armoroad.

With every class from the original two Etrian Odyssey titles completely scrapped, longtime fans will have to dissolve their adventuring guilds and start hiring anew. You'll find pirates, phalanxes, heavy ballistae, and even humble farmers among the new recruits, and each brings an interesting assortment of new abilities to the table. Although players are still limited to only five characters per party, that sixth open character slot will no longer be wasted: Beast Callers can fill it with summoned monsters while Shinobi can split their HP to create a controllable shadow double.

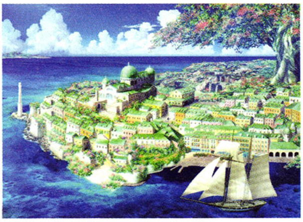
The Oceanic Quests finally provide something interesting to do outside of the game's central labyrinth. Once your guild acquires a ship, you can equip rations, sails, and fishing gear and set off to explore the island remains of the mostly sunken city. By carefully charting ocean currents and shoals, you can find the quickest paths to monster-filled islands that host optional combat quests. Players can attempt these battles solo with a mix of player- and computer-controlled allies, or link wirelessly with their friends and divvy up the party slots. —**CASEY L.**

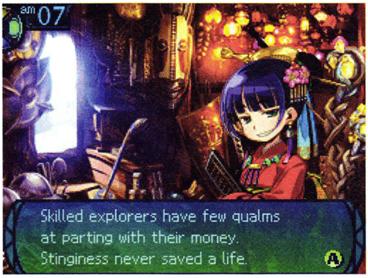


am 08
TURN 1
Aubrey attacks!

	HP	TP
Becquerel	32	36
Unity	31	19
Eve	28	24
Gordito	37	18
Aubrey	50	24

[Below] Every little backwater fishing village has their own Yggdrasil world-tree these days.



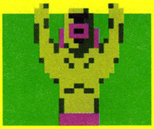


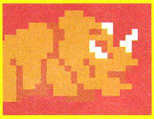
am 07

Skilled explorers have few qualms
at parting with their money.
Stinginess never saved a life.

A WINNER IS...

Summer vacation! We forgot what the sun looked like.



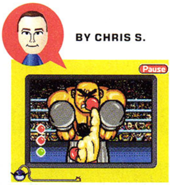


DODONGO DISLIKES...

Game delays. Metroid: Other M and Sonic 4 can't come soon enough!

Play Our Games!

Loyal readers already know that we here at Nintendo Power made our own microgames to illustrate the many features of WarioWare D.I.Y. (see Vol. 253). But we're thrilled to announce that you will soon be able to play them! As a part of Nintendo's Big Name Games campaign, our creations will rub elbows with microgames from legendary creators such as Yoshio Sakamoto (Metroid) and Masahiro Sakurai (Super Smash Bros.). The entire collection is available to WarioWare D.I.Y. owners via Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection, so check us out!

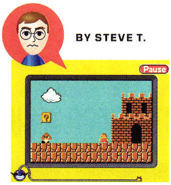


BY CHRIS S.

Funky Boxing

RELEASE: 5/24

Land three punches and make history in this ode to Punch-Out!!

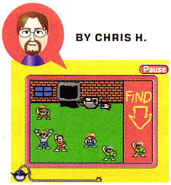


BY STEVE T.

Revenge

RELEASE: 5/31

Turn the tables and teach Mario that not every Goomba can be stomped.

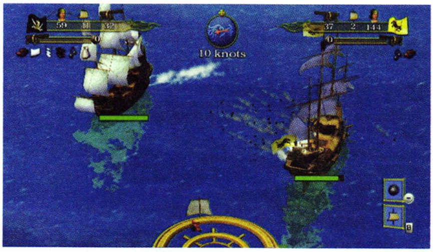


BY CHRIS H.

Power Surge

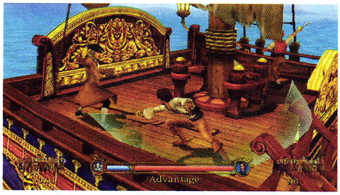
RELEASE: 6/7

Quickly find the featured NP editor among his retro 8-bit buddies.



A Pirate's Life for Wii

Wii is the latest port of call for the classic Sid Meier's Pirates!



[Above] Extra billowy shirts and pant cuffs give pirates the edge in sword-to-sword combat.

SID MEIER'S PIRATES! is a game that's older than many of our readers, but it hasn't survived for 23 years without good reason. Originally created for the Commodore 64 computer in 1987, Pirates! has been ported to nearly a dozen platforms since, and publisher 2K Games has something special in store for the new Wii edition.

Players begin the game as a privateer for a 17th-century European nation, and are free to chart any career path they choose on the high seas. That can include anything from running peaceful trade routes to plundering coastal villages, just so long as the money keeps flowing in. Your ultimate goal is to retire as the richest pirate alive.

Pirates! is heavy on sim elements, but a series of minigames rewards sharp reflexes as well. In addition to such classic activities as swordfighting, ship-to-ship combat, and jig-dancing (all fully remade to take advantage of the Wii Remote), the Wii version offers a pair of entirely new games in the form of lock picking and naval bombardment. It also offers several original ships to outfit and crew members to recruit. Sid Meier's Pirates! will make landfall this autumn. —**CASEY L.**

NEW BUNDLE ALERT

Wii
Wii Sports
Resort

The Wii console is now available in black or white and comes loaded with extras:

Wii Sports

+

Wii Sports Resort

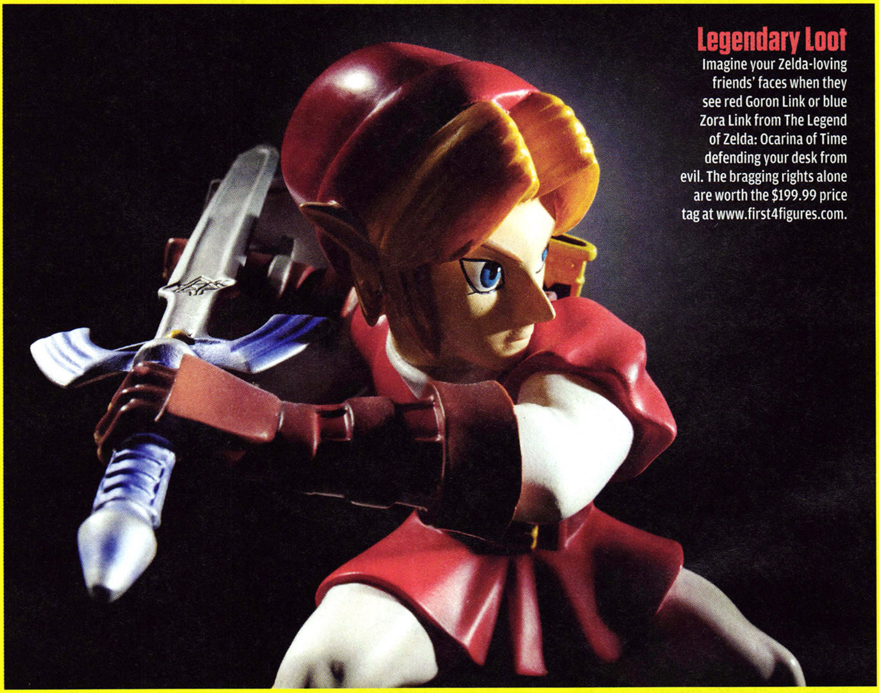
+

Wii MotionPlus

STILL $199

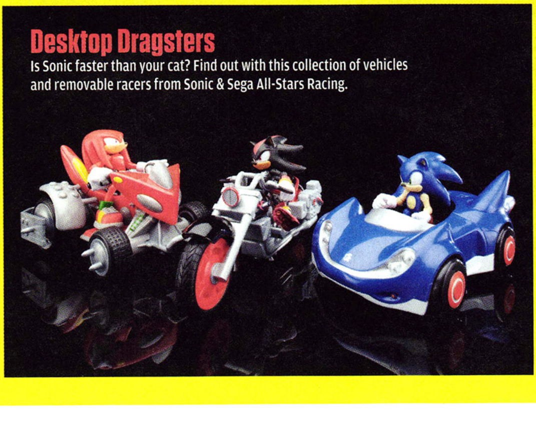
COLLECTOR'S CORNER

SERIOUSLY COOL STUFF FOR SERIOUS NINTENDO FANS



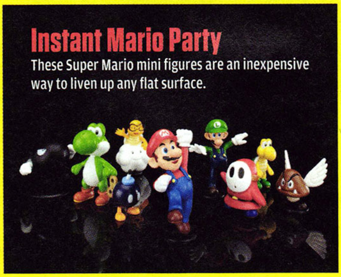
Legendary Loot

Imagine your Zelda-loving friends' faces when they see red Goron Link or blue Zora Link from The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time defending your desk from evil. The bragging rights alone are worth the $199.99 price tag at www.first4figures.com.



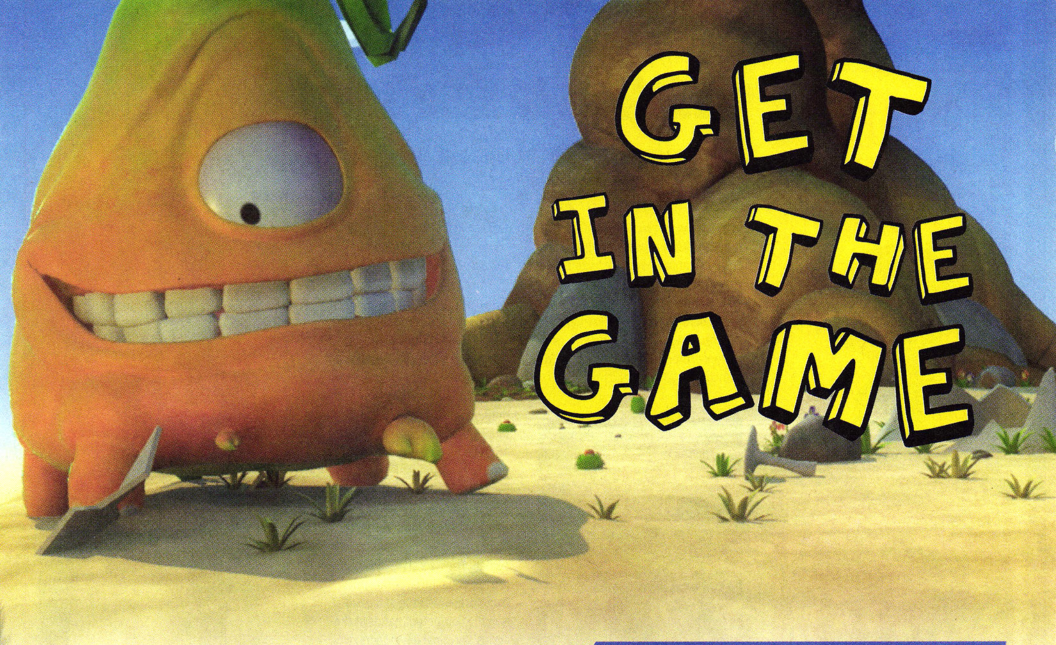
Desktop Dragsters

Is Sonic faster than your cat? Find out with this collection of vehicles and removable racers from Sonic & Sega All-Stars Racing.



Instant Mario Party

These Super Mario mini figures are an inexpensive way to liven up any flat surface.



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ProjectFUN
WORKSHOPS

WHAT ARE YOU DOING THIS SUMMER?

DigiPen Institute of Technology, presents a 2-week summer workshop series designed to introduce participants of all experience levels to the fundamentals of Game Programming, 3D Computer Animation, Game Design, Robotics.

Go here for more info:
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Learn the basics of robot mechanics, electronics and software by signing up and building your own robot in this workshop.

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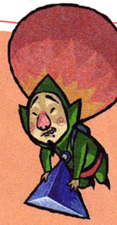
POWER QUIZ



EASY

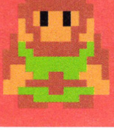
Who is this, and in which Zelda game did he debut?

AVERAGE

Between Link, Zelda, and Ganon, who bears the Triforce of Wisdom, the Triforce of Courage, and the Triforce of Power?

HARDCORE

What is the shopkeeper's greeting in The Legend of Zelda?



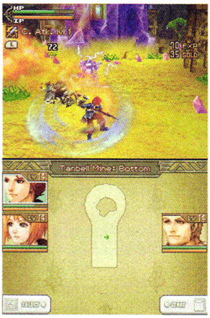
ANSWERS EASY: Tingle/The Legend of Zelda: Majora's Mask. AVERAGE: Link: Courage/Zelda: Wisdom/Ganon: Power. HARDCORE: "Buy somethin' will ya!"

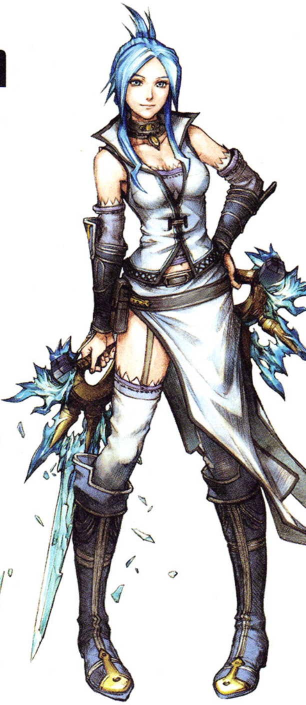
Sinistrals to Rise Again

Natsume has snatched up Square Enix's **Lufia** reboot for a North American release.

WITH SQUARE ENIX being much more selective these days about their DS localizations, we were beginning to lose hope of seeing the newest installment of the cult-favorite Lufia series of RPGs (known as Estpolis in Japan). Fortunately, Square Enix isn't the only company with a stake in the franchise—Natsume had published two of the four Estpolis games in the US, and now they've stepped in to release this one as well.

Titled Lufia: Curse of the Sinistrals, this installment is loosely based on the Super NES game Lufia II: Rise of the Sinistrals (which is chronologically the first game in the series). While the cast, the storyline, and focus on puzzle-filled dungeons remain the same, pretty much everything else has changed. This version features full-3-D environments and has switched from turn-based RPG combat to real-time action, with players able to toggle between six playable characters by tapping their faces on the lower screen. The new style of gameplay is a big departure for the Lufia franchise, but Curse of the Sinistrals is in the competent hands of the series's original developers, who have returned to it for the first time in nearly a decade. Natsume hopes to bring us the fruits of their labor by year's end. **—CASEY L.**

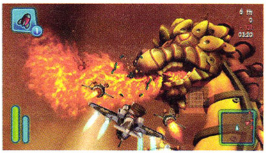


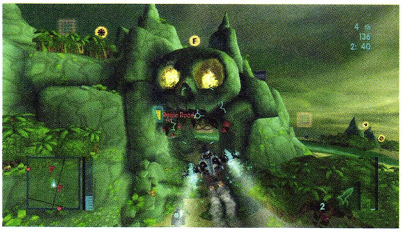


Sims Soars

EA's MySims series continues its whirlwind tour through gaming genres with just-announced adventure-shooter **MySims SkyHeroes**.

IT DIDN'T TAKE long for the MySims series to break from the core social interactions of its older sibling, The Sims. Now that it has made the rounds through party gaming, racing, and adventure, the franchise is taking a barrel roll into aerial combat for both Wii and DS. Yet MySims SkyHeroes remains at least partially tethered to its roots. Customization continues to play a part as you launch missions to take on flying baddies. You can repaint your plane, for example, to blend into the background, and refit the craft with new parts, such as wings that add maneuverability and a new engine for more velocity. The game also features speed challenges, which may take on a form similar to the minigames in MySims Agents. Also returning from Agents is main villain Morcubus, who is the catalyst for the franchise's first-ever boss battles. More firsts include cooperative and competitive missions for both local split-screen multiplayer action and online play for up to 10 participants. The game is zeroing in on a fall release. **—GEORGE S.**

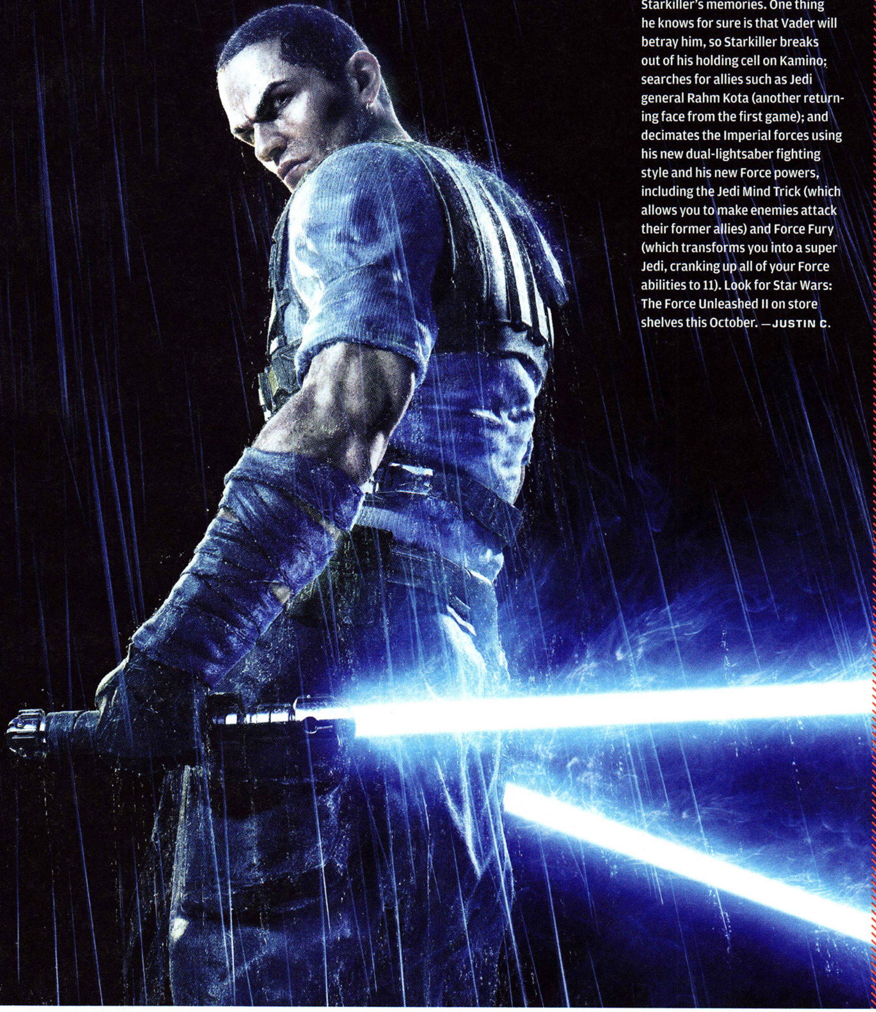


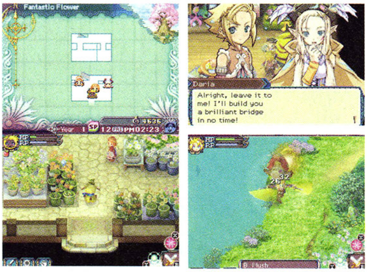


Attack of the Clone

A badass Jedi is back with a vengeance in Star Wars: The Force Unleashed II for Wii and DS.

YOU JUST CAN'T keep a good Jedi down. Despite having died at the end of Star Wars: The Force Unleashed, Darth Vader's secret apprentice, Starkiller, returns in the Red Fly Studio-developed Star Wars: The Force Unleashed II for Wii. (The game will also be available on Nintendo DS.) Actually, it's not the exact same Starkiller; this one is a clone created by Vader that has fragments of the original Starkiller's memories. One thing he knows for sure is that Vader will betray him, so Starkiller breaks out of his holding cell on Kamino; searches for allies such as Jedi general Rahm Kota (another returning face from the first game); and decimates the Imperial forces using his new dual-lightsaber fighting style and his new Force powers, including the Jedi Mind Trick (which allows you to make enemies attack their former allies) and Force Fury (which transforms you into a super Jedi, cranking up all of your Force abilities to 11). Look for Star Wars: The Force Unleashed II on store shelves this October. —**JUSTIN C.**





Daria
Alright, leave it to me! I'll build you a brilliant bridge in no time!

RUNE FACTORY 3: A FANTASY HARVEST MOON

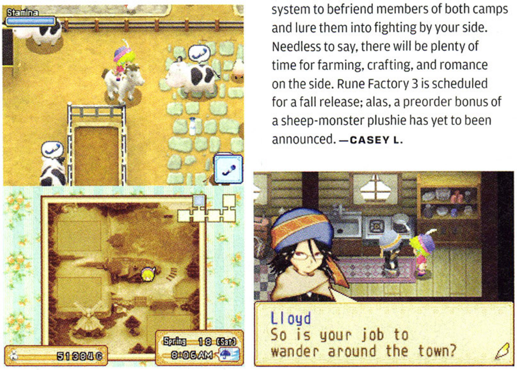
Tillin' Fields and Killin' Fiends

Between **Grand Bazaar** and **Rune Factory 3**, Harvest Moon fans will be reaping a bumper crop in 2010.

NATSUME SEEMS TO get a perverse thrill out of keeping Harvest Moon fans in suspense, but they always come through in the end. After waiting months for the official word about the company's plans for the long-awaited DS sequels to both the mainline Harvest Moon series and its Rune Factory action-RPG spin-off, Natsume has finally given us the thumbs-up with regard to both.

Harvest Moon: Grand Bazaar adds another layer to the series's formula, offering players a chance to not only grow a farm empire and a family, but also to help restore a run-down public bazaar to its former glory. Players can open a shop to sell their fresh produce, baked goods, and arts and crafts directly to the good folk of Zephyr Town, and return the backwater village to prominence in the process. Grand Bazaar is scheduled to ship at the end of July, and those who preorder their copy from GameStop will receive a horse plushie for their Harvest Moon stuffed-animal collections.

Rune Factory 3: A Fantasy Harvest Moon puts players in the middle of a conflict between the human village of Sharance and the beast kingdom of Univir. As a weremonster capable of transforming into a sheeplike creature, you'll be able to utilize the game's new battle-companion system to befriend members of both camps and lure them into fighting by your side. Needless to say, there will be plenty of time for farming, crafting, and romance on the side. Rune Factory 3 is scheduled for a fall release; alas, a preorder bonus of a sheep-monster plushie has yet to been announced. —**CASEY L.**

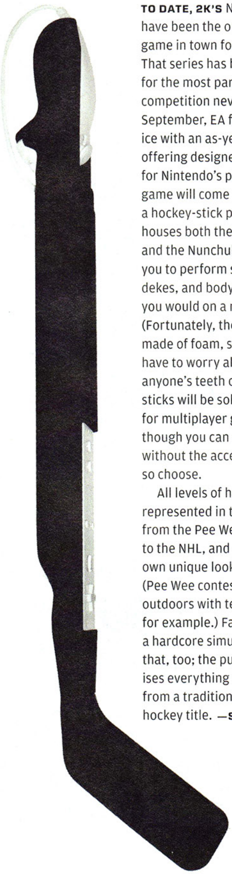


Lloyd
So is your job to wander around the town?

HARVEST MOON: GRAND BAZAAR

Hockey Hero

EA Sports gets into the accessory game with a stick peripheral to accompany its new NHL title for Wii.



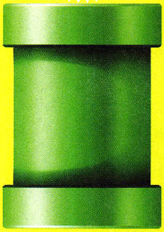
TO DATE, 2K'S NHL efforts have been the only hockey game in town for Wii owners. That series has been very good for the most part, but a little competition never hurts. This September, EA finally hits the ice with an as-yet-untitled offering designed exclusively for Nintendo's platform. The game will come packaged with a hockey-stick peripheral that houses both the Wii Remote and the Nunchuk, allowing you to perform slap shots, dekes, and body checks as you would on a real-life rink. (Fortunately, the blade is made of foam, so you don't have to worry about knocking anyone's teeth out.) Additional sticks will be sold separately for multiplayer gatherings, though you can compete without the accessory if you so choose.

All levels of hockey are represented in the game, from the Pee Wee leagues to the NHL, and each has its own unique look and feel. (Pee Wee contests are played outdoors with teams of three, for example.) Fans looking for a hardcore simulation will find that, too; the publisher promises everything you'd expect from a traditional EA Sports hockey title. —**STEVE T.**

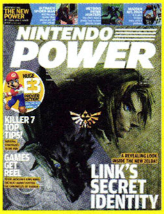
WARP ZONE

What we were writing about way back when

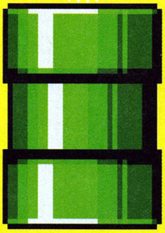
5 YEARS AGO



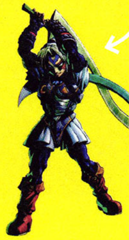
The July 2005 issue introduced the magazine's biggest ever redesign, making it a major Nintendo Power milestone. Gone were the dark and cluttered game-map-filled pages that had come to define the magazine, replaced with a cleaner, more modern look. The new design was a huge hit with readers, much more so than the Game Boy system's "Micro" redesign that was featured inside the issue.


NINTENDO POWER
E3
KILLER 7 TOP TIPS!
GAMES GET REEL
LINK'S SECRET IDENTITY

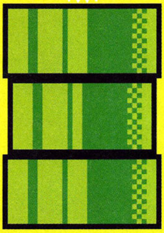
10 YEARS AGO



Is the repeating three-day structure of The Legend of Zelda: Majora's Mask an annoying gimmick or one of the series's best hooks? The debate started in the July 2000 issue, when NP first dove into the highly anticipated follow-up to Ocarina of Time. No matter what you think of the game's unique features, we should all be able to agree that the Fierce Deity—which appears only in Majora's Mask—is the most badass version of Link to date.

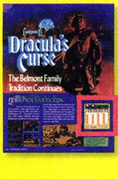


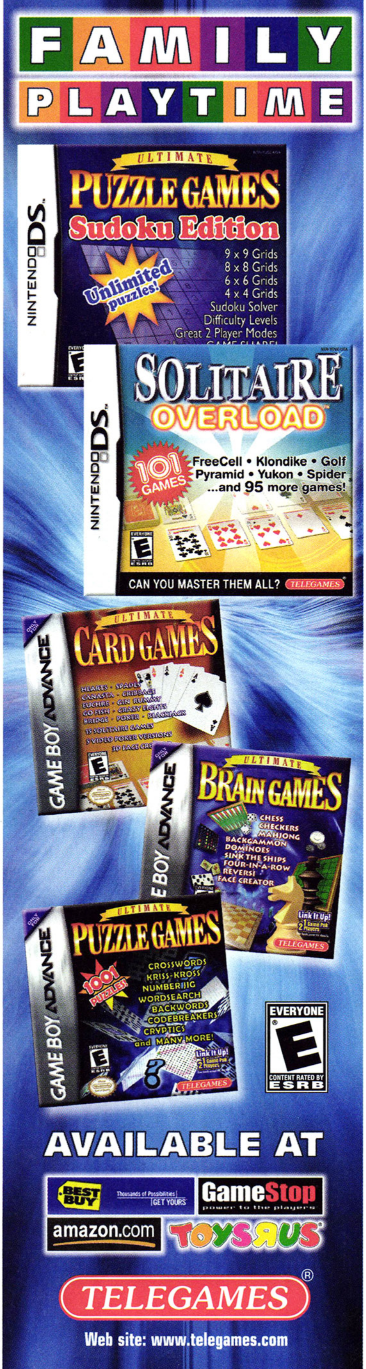
20 YEARS AGO



No disrespect to our cover game, Chip 'N Dale Rescue Rangers (Disney games rocked on the NES), but the real standout in this issue was Castlevania III. Need proof? Just check out our Power & Player Meter ratings for the game. The, er, old dude gave it 4s and 5s and the, um, kid snowman...didn't fill it out at all, I guess. Actually, our memory of how this rating system worked is pretty fuzzy, but history has proven that Castlevania III rocked the house down.

POWER & PLAYER METER


Dracula's Curse
The Belmont Family Tradition Continues


FAMILY PLAYTIME
ULTIMATE PUZZLE GAMES Sudoku Edition
Unlimited puzzles!
9 x 9 Grids
8 x 8 Grids
6 x 6 Grids
4 x 4 Grids
Sudoku Solver
Difficulty Levels
Great 2 Player Modes
SOLITAIRE OVERLOAD
101 GAMES
FreeCell • Klondike • Golf
Pyramid • Yukon • Spider
...and 95 more games!
CAN YOU MASTER THEM ALL?
ULTIMATE CARD GAMES
ULTIMATE BRAIN GAMES
ULTIMATE PUZZLE GAMES
1001 PUZZLES!
CROSSWORDS
KRISS-KROSS
NUMBER JIG
WORDSEARCH
BACKWORDS
CODEBREAKERS
CRYPTICS
and MANY MORE!
EVERYONE
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
AVAILABLE AT
BEST BUY
GameStop
amazon.com
TOYS R US
TELEGAMES
Web site: www.telegames.com

STAR POWER

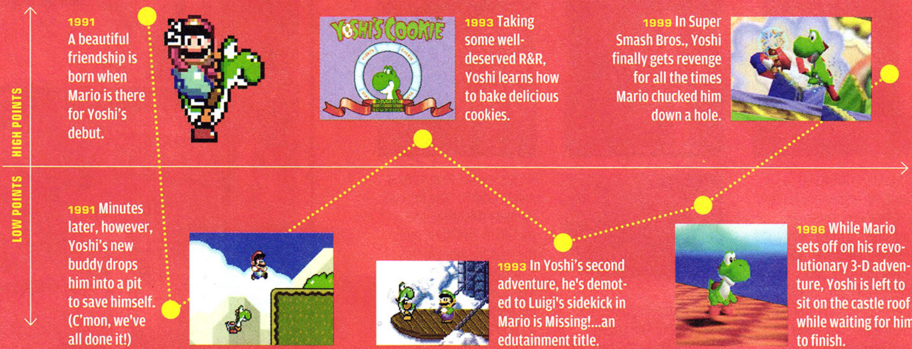
A closer look at the characters we love

Yoshi

FIRST APPEARANCE:
SUPER MARIO WORLD,
SUPER NES, 1991

From his island home to outer space, Yoshi continues to go where no one has before: under Mario's butt.

CAREER GRAPH



1991 A beautiful friendship is born when Mario is there for Yoshi's debut.

1991 Minutes later, however, Yoshi's new buddy drops him into a pit to save himself. (C'mon, we've all done it!)

1993 Taking some well-deserved R&R, Yoshi learns how to bake delicious cookies.

1993 In Yoshi's second adventure, he's demoted to Luigi's sidekick in Mario is Missing!...an edutainment title.

1996 While Mario sets off on his revolutionary 3-D adventure, Yoshi is left to sit on the castle roof while waiting for him to finish.

1999 In Super Smash Bros., Yoshi finally gets revenge for all the times Mario chucked him down a hole.

OUR FAVORITE YOSHI GAMES

Super Mario World

SUPER NES, 1991

This Super NES pack-in game didn't just debut Yoshi; it remains one of his best appearances. Our favorite bit is how hopping on him adds a funky beat to the music.

Super Mario World 2: Yoshi's Island

SUPER NES, 1995

Yoshi gained his trademark flutter jump and the ability to throw eggs in this landmark platformer, which is easily his best headlining gig so far.

New Super Mario Bros. Wii

Wii, 2009

What's better than Yoshi? A full-on Yoshi posse! Up to four players can enjoy gulping Goombas or each other—the only downer is that Yoshi wasn't included in more stages.

Super Mario Galaxy 2

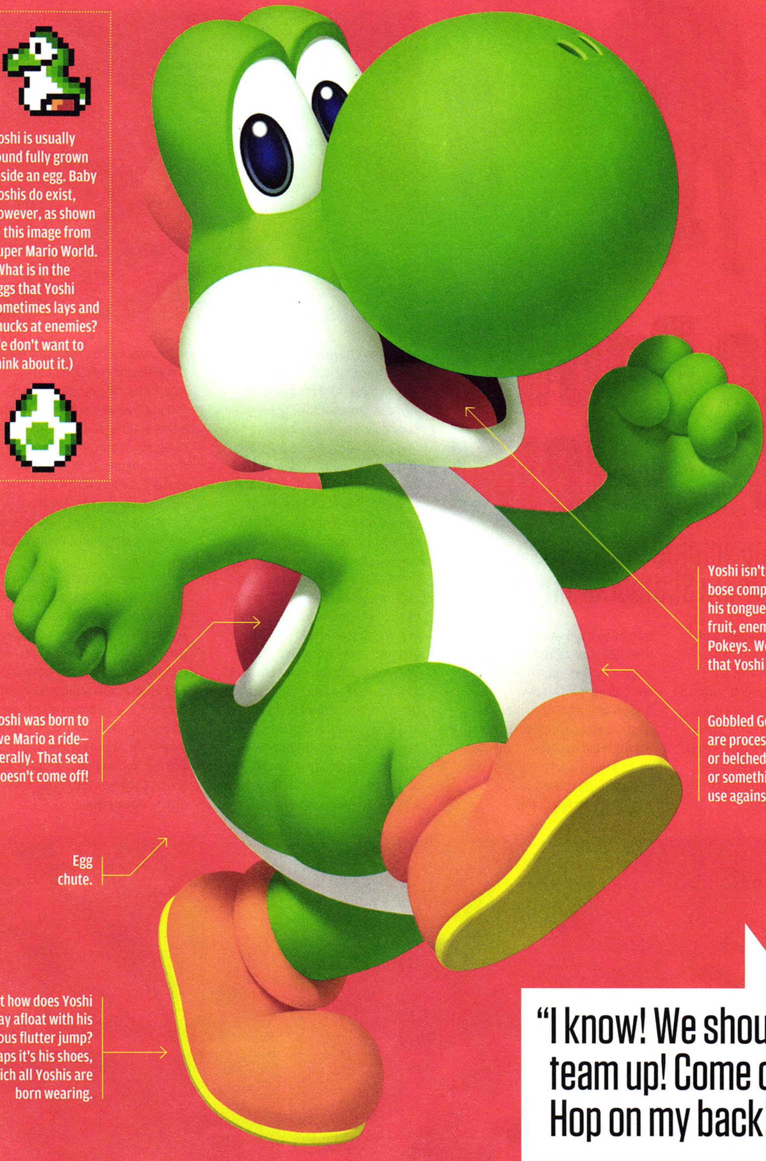
Wii, 2010

Yoshi's latest adventure at Mario's side is one of his best, with many amazing levels that were made to let the green guy strut his stuff.

SHADES of YOSHI

Mario's pal has appeared in the following colors:

🟪 🟦
🟨 🟪
🟫 🟥
🟦 ⬛
⬜ 🟧
⬛



Yoshi is usually found fully grown inside an egg. Baby Yoshis do exist, however, as shown in this image from Super Mario World. (What is in the eggs that Yoshi sometimes lays and chucks at enemies? We don't want to think about it.)

Yoshi isn't Mario's most verbose companion, but he puts his tongue to good use grabbing fruit, enemies, and even prickly Pokeys. We can only assume that Yoshi has no tastebuds.

Yoshi was born to give Mario a ride—literally. That seat doesn't come off!

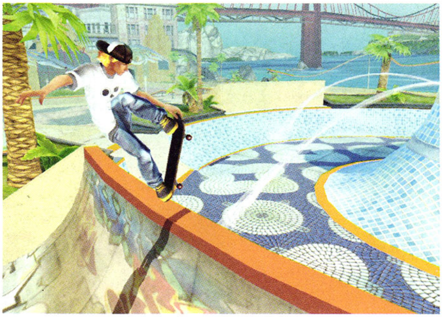
Gobbled Goombas and the like are processed here into eggs, or belched back up as flames or something else Yoshi can use against bullying baddies.

Egg chute.

Just how does Yoshi stay afloat with his famous flutter jump? Perhaps it's his shoes, which all Yoshis are born wearing.

> "I know! We should team up! Come on! Hop on my back!"

FROM SUPER MARIO GALAXY 2, Wii, 2010



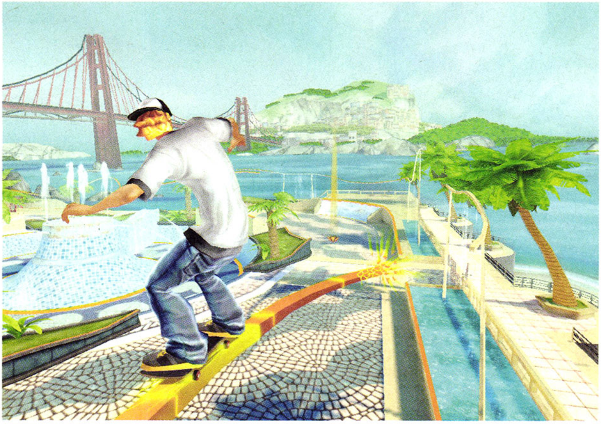
No Snow? No Problem!

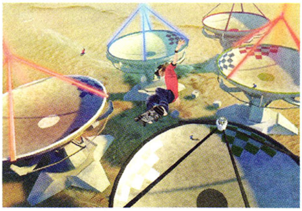
The Flying Tomato hits the asphalt in Shaun White Skateboarding for Wii.

WHEN THE SEASONS change and the snow has melted away, what's a snowboarder to do? Why, go skateboarding, of course! It's what Shaun White does in real life (he's an X Games champion in the sport), and it's what Ubisoft's latest Shaun White game—appropriately titled Shaun White Skateboarding—is all about. But making the transition from snowboarding to skateboarding isn't as easy as slapping wheels onto the board and calling it a day; developer Ubisoft Montreal designed Shaun White Skateboarding to feel like the different experience that it is, while adding a narrative that ties everything together.

With this in mind, the developers have set Shaun White Skateboarding in a city that's far removed from the powder-covered slopes of the Shaun White Snowboarding titles. But it's a city that's dull and gray—to bring life to this metropolis, Shaun and his pals (many of whom are characters from the previous Shaun White games) have to ride around and complete various challenges across seven districts. After completing these challenges—which could be tagging pieces of the environment by riding on them, for example, or collecting a certain number of objects—the world will shift, becoming brighter, more colorful, and more skateable. Additionally, there are Transformation markers in the city; roll through these, and the environment will shift as you're skating, creating a series of grindable railings that allow you to reach a previously unreachable rooftop, for instance. (This real-time transformation doesn't affect the frame rate, either; the developers are locking it at 60 frames per second.) Keeping the action constant is one of Ubisoft Montreal's goals, and that's reflected in the way your skater interacts with his surroundings; he will shove off walls to prevent getting stuck, and will start skating again almost immediately after bailing.

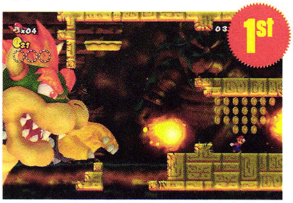
The developers also want to make Shaun White Skateboarding accessible, especially its control scheme. The game can be played with the Wii Remote by itself (employing the A and B Buttons, as well as motion controls) or with the Wii Balance Board accessory. We haven't seen the balance board scheme in action yet, but we'll bring you our impressions as Shaun White Snowboarding's fall release date nears. **—JUSTIN C.**





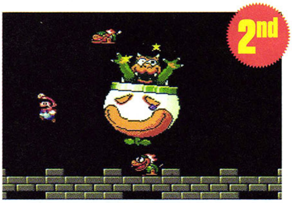
Mario and Bowser's Top Five Tussles

Bowser is brewing trouble yet again in this month's Super Mario Galaxy 2 (warp to page 80 for the gushing review), and his fantastic final fight with Mario got us thinking: which of the archrivals' past battles were the best? For our gold coins, you can't top the following titanic tussles. —**CHRIS S.**



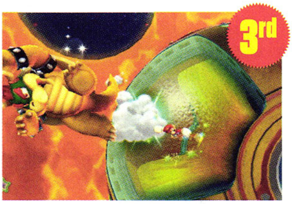
New Super Mario Bros. Wii

This is actually two fights in one: an old-school opening round that pays homage to the original Super Mario Bros., and an intense platforming challenge in which a Godzilla-sized Bowser chases Mario over an ocean of lava. It's tough, original, and totally fun.



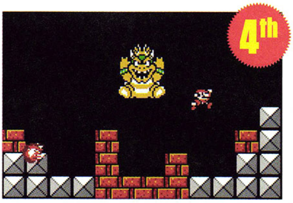
Super Mario World

What early-'90s Super NES player could forget the then-state-of-the-art zoom effect used by Bowser in his bouncing propeller-powered balloon? The fight is frantic from start to finish, with Mario dodging Bowser's attacks and tossing his Mecha-Koopas back at him.



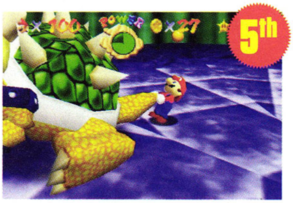
Super Mario Galaxy

The Bowser brawl in Galaxy 2 actually tops this one, but we don't want to spoil it so soon. The first Galaxy's multipart cosmic clash is still among the best, and rewards the player with one of the series's best endings.



Super Mario Bros. 3

Although this is the most basic battle on the list, Mario's second face-off with his nemesis is still a lot of fun (Bowser chickened out of Super Mario Bros. 2). The Koopa King keeps trying to jump on *Mario's* head for a change, but ends up digging his own grave.



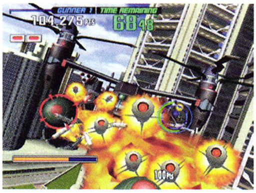
Super Mario 64

Bowser's most humiliating defeat comes in his first 3-D fight, in which Mario repeatedly manhandles the big bully by swinging him around by the tail. This is one of the duo's most memorable matches, featuring excellent use of the then-new Control Stick.

BONUS BOUT!

Mario & Luigi: Bowser's Inside Story

This matchup isn't as grand as the others (it takes place at the start of the game, after all), but we love the fact that this is the only Mario-versus-Bowser battle that Luigi is present for, *and he sleeps through it.* Way to go, bro!



Coast-to-Coast Carnage

Sega will be adding a pair of late-'90s arcade shooters to their already-rich library of gun-game ports on Wii. The company's newest Arcade Hits Pack will include 1995's Gunblade NY and its 1998 sequel, LA Machineguns. Both games are on-rails shooters in which the player uses aircraft-mounted guns to blow away ninjas, mechs, tanks, and pretty much everything else that moves. Sega has no plans to release the oversized force-feedback machine guns that were the main feature of the arcade versions, but enterprising players should be able to whip up their own with a Wii Remote, a jackhammer, and a roll of duct tape. —**CASEY L.**

GAME FORECAST

READERS' MOST WANTED

Vote for your favorites at
www.nintendopower.com/polls

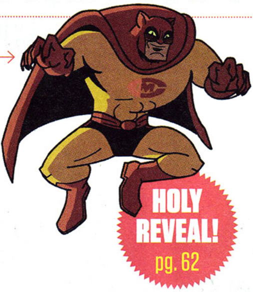
1 Super Mario Galaxy 2

2 The Legend of Zelda*

3 Metroid: Other M

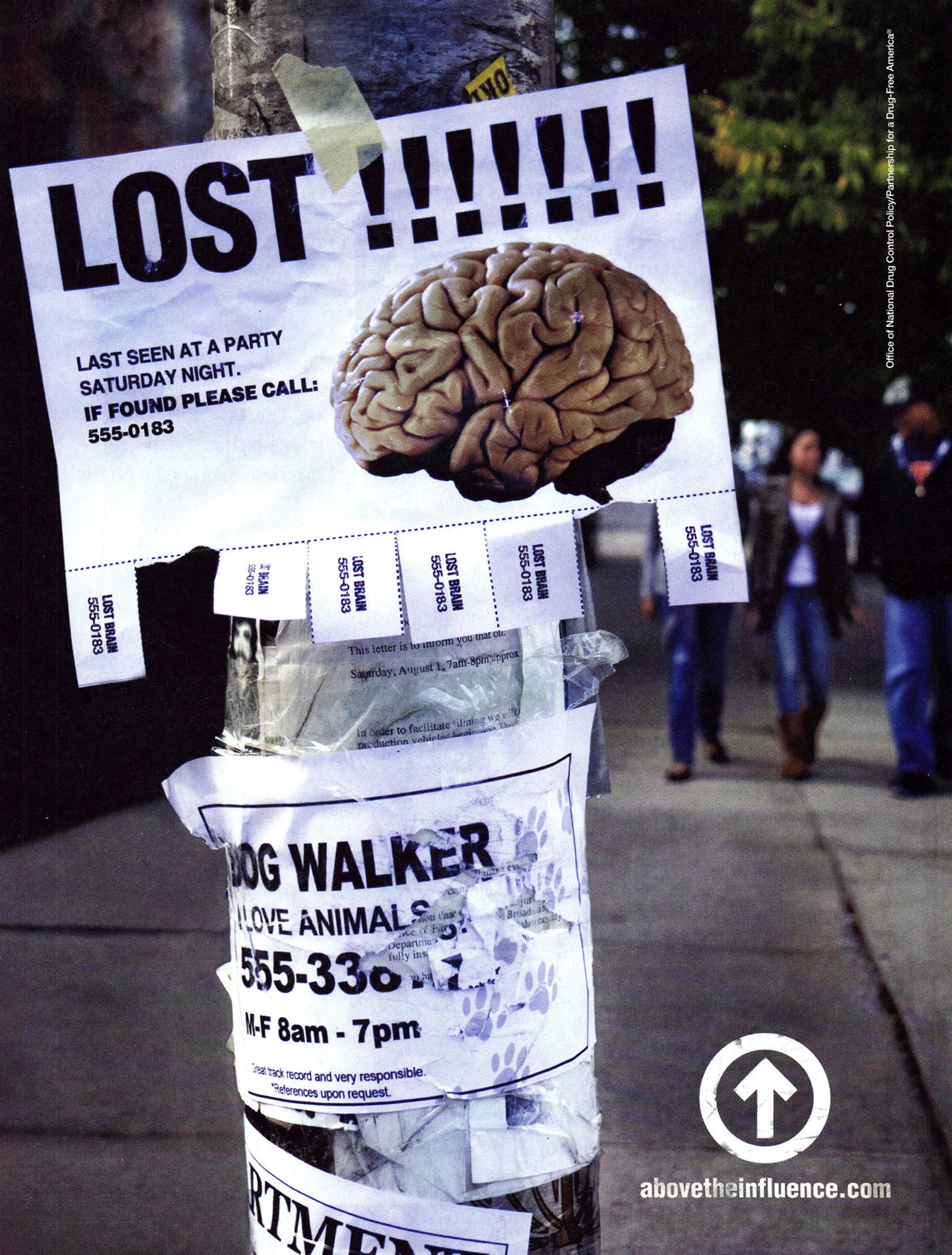
4 Epic Mickey
5 Conduit 2
6 LEGO Harry Potter: Years 1-4
7 Sin and Punishment: Star Successor
8 LEGO Star Wars III: The Clone Wars
9 Rock Band 3
10 de Blob: The Underground

Wii		
Batman: The Brave and the Bold: The Videogame	Warner Bros.	9/10
Ben 10 Ultimate Alien: Cosmic Destruction	D3Publisher	10/10
Call of Duty: Black Ops	Activision	11/10
de Blob: The Underground	THQ	SPR 11
Deca Sports 3	Hudson	FALL 10
Def Jam Rapstar	Konami	FALL 10
Despicable Me	D3Publisher	7/10
DJ Hero 2*	Activision	FALL 10
EA Sports Active 2.0*	Electronic Arts	FALL 10
Enclave: Shadows of Twilight	TopWare	2010
Epic Mickey	Disney	FALL 10
FlingSmash	Nintendo	SUM 10
Flip's Twisted World	Majesco	9/10
Ghost Recon: Future Soldier	Ubisoft	HOL 10
Gormiti: The Lords of Nature!	Konami	2010
Grease	505	TBA
Greg Hastings Paintball 2	Majesco	9/10
The Grinder	TBA	TBA
Guilty Party	Disney	7/10
Guitar Hero: Warriors of Rock	Activision	FALL 10
Gunblade NY and LA Machineguns Arcade Hits Pack	Sega	FALL 10
Hard Grip: The Climbing Game	TBA	TBA
HAWX 2	Ubisoft	FALL 10
Ivy the Kiwi?	XSEED	SUM 10
The Last Airbender	THQ	6/10
Legend of the Guardians	Warner Bros.	9/10
The Legend of Zelda*	Nintendo	TBA
LEGO Harry Potter: Years 1-4	Warner Bros.	6/10
LEGO Star Wars III: The Clone Wars	LucasArts	Q4 10
Line Attack Heroes	Nintendo	TBA
The Lord of the Rings: Aragorn's Quest	Warner Bros.	9/10
Lost in Shadow	Hudson	FALL 10
Madden NFL 11	EA Sports	8/10
Metroid: Other M	Nintendo	8/10
Monopoly Streets	Electronic Arts	FALL 10
Mr. T	TBA	TBA
MySims SkyHeroes	Electronic Arts	FALL 10
NBA Jam	EA Sports	FALL 10
NHL*	EA Sports	9/10
NHL 2K11	2K Sports	FALL 10
Pro Evolution Soccer 2011	Konami	FALL 10
Pyroblazer	TBA	TBA
Rock Band 3	MTV Games	HOL 10
Rock of the Dead	Conspiracy	SUM 10
Sengoku Basara Samurai Heroes	Capcom	9/10
Samurai Warriors 3	Nintendo	FALL 10
Shaun White Skateboarding	Ubisoft	Q4 10
Sid Meier's Pirates!	2K	FALL 10
The Sims 3	Electronic Arts	FALL 10
Sin & Punishment: Star Successor	Nintendo	6/10
Sky Pirates of Neo Terra	Aspyr	TBA
Sonic Colors	Sega	FALL 10
Spider-Man: Shattered Dimensions	Activision	9/10
Star Wars: The Force Unleashed II	LucasArts	10/10
Stratusphere	TBA	TBA
Tournament of Legends	Sega	7/10
TrackMania	TBA	TBA
Transformers: Cybertron Adventures	Activision	6/10
Wipeout: The Game	Activision	SUM 10
NINTENDO DS		
Batman: The Brave and the Bold: The Videogame	Warner Bros.	9/10
Ben 10 Ultimate Alien: Cosmic Destruction	D3Publisher	10/10
Crafting Mama	Majesco	FALL 10
Despicable Me	D3Publisher	7/10
Disciples II	Strategy First	TBA
Doodle Hex	TBA	TBA
Dragon Quest VI: Realms of Reverie	Square Enix	TBA
Dragon Quest IX: Sentinels of the Starry Skies	Nintendo	7/10
Duke Nukem Trilogy: Chain Reaction	Deep Silver	TBA
Duke Nukem Trilogy: Critical Mass	Deep Silver	TBA
Duke Nukem Trilogy: Proving Grounds	Deep Silver	TBA
Easy Piano	Valcon	2010
Etrian Odyssey III: The Drowned City	Atlus	FALL 10
Galactic Taz Ball	Warner Bros.	FALL 10
Ghost Trick: Phantom Detective	Capcom	FALL 10
Ghostwire: Link to the Paranormal	Majesco	10/10
Golden Sun DS	Nintendo	2010
Gormiti: The Lords of Nature!	Konami	2010
Grease	505	TBA
Harvest Moon: Grand Bazaar	Natsume	7/10
Ivy the Kiwi?	XSEED	SUM 10
The Last Airbender	THQ	6/10
Legend of the Guardians	Warner Bros.	9/10
LEGO Harry Potter: Years 1-4	Warner Bros.	6/10
LEGO Star Wars III: The Clone Wars	LucasArts	Q4 10
Littlest Pet Shop 3: Biggest Stars—Blue Team	Electronic Arts	FALL 10
Littlest Pet Shop 3: Biggest Stars—Pink Team	Electronic Arts	FALL 10
Littlest Pet Shop 3: Biggest Stars—Purple Team	Electronic Arts	FALL 10
The Lord of the Rings: Aragorn's Quest	Warner Bros.	9/10
Lufia: Curse of the Sinistrals	Natsume	2010
Monopoly	Electronic Arts	FALL 10
MySims SkyHeroes	Electronic Arts	FALL 10
Okamiden	Capcom	2011
Pirate Battle	Orbital Media	TBA
Monster Tale	Majesco	12/10
Puzzle Overload	Telegames	SPR 10
Puzzle Quest II	D3Publisher	6/10
River City Super Sports Challenge	Aksys	7/10
Rune Factory 3: A Fantasy Harvest Moon	Natsume	FALL 10
Scribblenauts Sequel*	Warner Bros.	FALL 10
The Sims 3	Electronic Arts	FALL 10
Solitaire Overload Plus	Telegames	SPR 10
Sonic Colors	Sega	FALL 10
Spider-Man: Shattered Dimensions	Activision	9/10
Star Wars: The Force Unleashed II	LucasArts	10/10
TNA Impact!: Cross the Line	SouthPeak	WIN 10
Transformers: War for Cybertron—Autobots	Activision	6/10
Transformers: War for Cybertron—Decepticons	Activision	6/10
Wipeout: The Game	Activision	SUM 10
Witch's Wish	Natsume	6/10



OUT NEXT MONTH!

RED TEXT = TITLES ADDED THIS MONTH. * TENTATIVE TITLE **NOTE:** RELEASE DATES OFTEN CHANGE.


LOST !!!!!!!!
LAST SEEN AT A PARTY
SATURDAY NIGHT.
IF FOUND PLEASE CALL:
555-0183
LOST BRAIN 555-0183
LOST BRAIN 555-0183
LOST BRAIN 555-0183
LOST BRAIN 555-0183
LOST BRAIN 555-0183
LOST BRAIN 555-0183
This letter is to inform you that on
Saturday, August 1, 7am-8pm approx
In order to facilitate filming we will
production vehicles beginning
DOG WALKER
I LOVE ANIMALS
555-338
M-F 8am - 7pm
Great track record and very responsible.
*References upon request.
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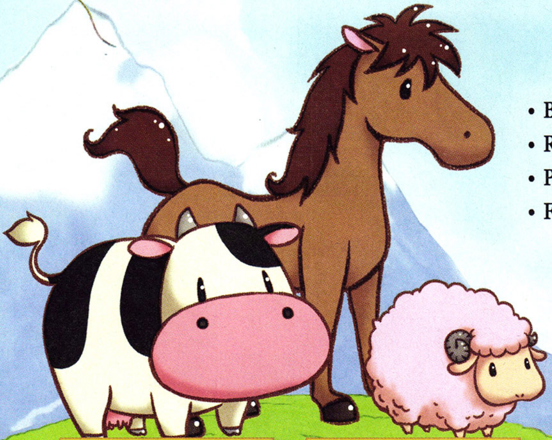
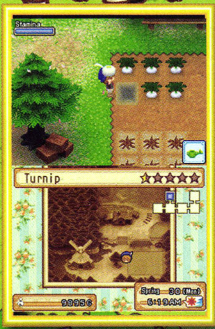
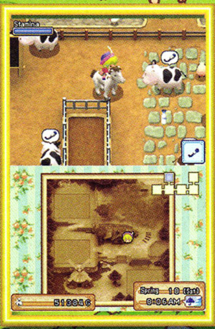
The Bazaar Is Now Open!

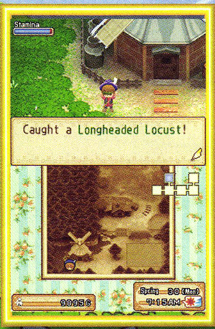
Zephyr Town's bazaar was once the grandest in the world, drawing customers and peddlers from all four corners of the Earth. These days, though, the bazaar has more tumbleweeds than customers. Maybe you can turn its fortunes around! Raise animals, harvest crops, craft rare delicacies, and then sell your wares at your very own shop! Can you bring prosperity back to Zephyr Town?

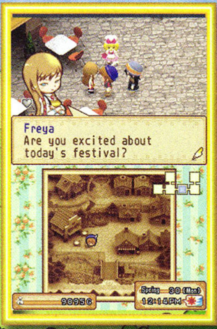


- Barter with customers at your shop!
- Raise a horse and compete in thrilling races!
- Play as a boy or as a girl!
- Find love, get married, and start a family!


Stamina
Turnip
98956
Spring 30 (Mon)
6:19AM


Stamina
51384G
Spring 18 (Sat)
8:06AM


Caught a Longheaded Locust!
Stamina
98956
Spring 30 (Mon)
7:15AM


Freya
Are you excited about today's festival?
98956
Spring 30 (Mon)
12:14PM

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Only while supplies last.

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DSiWARE PREVIEW
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WiiWARE UPDATE
Frobot

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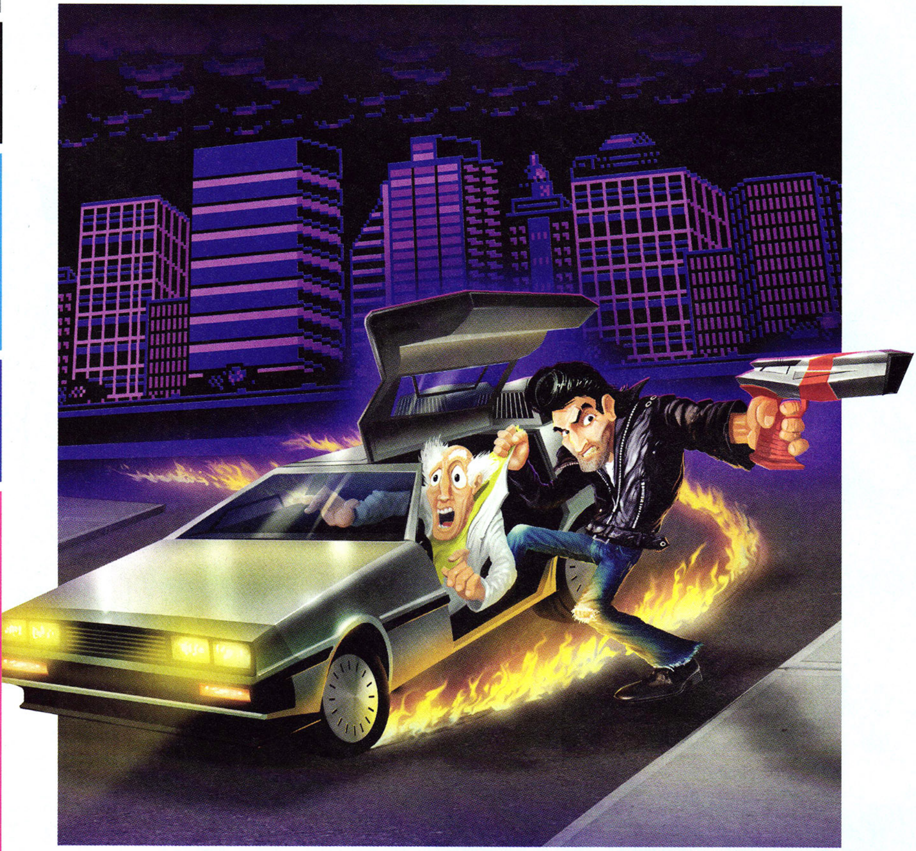
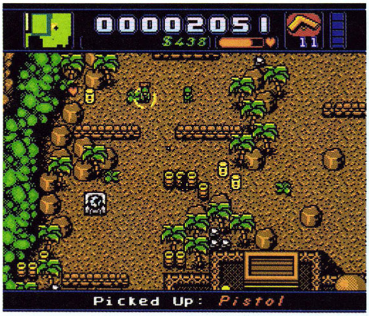
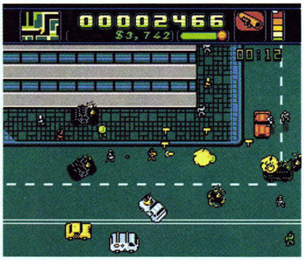


Going Back in Crime

Open-world gameplay collides with 8-bit style and everything '80s to create one of the craziest WiiWare games yet: Retro City Rampage.





[Above] The rocket launcher: for when you absolutely need to unleash maximum carnage.

TAKE THE GRAND Theft Auto formula, give it an 8-bit makeover, and spruce it up with countless '80s video game parodies—that's Retro City Rampage in a nutshell. It's not just an open-world crime game; it's the wackiest, funniest, most irreverent open-world crime game there is, and it's on its way to WiiWare.

"Retro City Rampage is an 8-bit open-world action game which parodies everything from the NES generation," states creator/designer/programmer Brian Provinciano of Vblank Entertainment. "Imagine going back to the games of the era with the freedom to steal cars, blow everything up, and run jobs for familiar faces. The entire game world is populated by these parodies, all outrageously mashed together."

Playing as a character simply (and appropriately) known as Player, you're thrust into the seedy underworld of Theftropolis city circa 1980, where you'll find yourself swiping vehicles, robbing banks, running from the police, and reveling in as much criminal mayhem as you see fit. (All the action is presented in a comical, 8-bit style; there's no blood or realistic violence.)

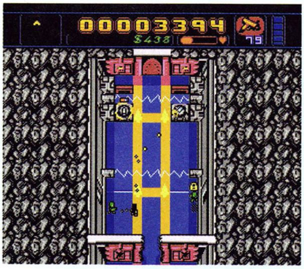
Provinciano makes no bones about the inspirations behind Retro City Rampage. "I think most of us get into the industry because of specific games we love, dreaming of working on the next one, or creating [our] own version[s]," he says. "[For me], Grand Theft Auto III was that game."

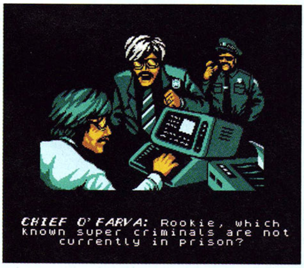
But Provinciano didn't want to just make a clone; he wanted to add his own twist to the genre. "Being equally as enthused about NES development, my open-world title became 8-bit, the goal being to deliver the same gameplay of [a modern] console title, and to a scale no 8-bit game had reached before it. When it came down to mission design and who the player would be running jobs for, characters from other 8-bit games and such seemed only natural, and the idea of a them all living together in a comedic world was born."

Presented in an overhead perspective, Retro City Rampage lets you explore the city to your heart's content: you can jack any car you see, use any weapons you find, and—in true 8-bit style—KO anyone you meet by jumping on his head (which usually rewards you with coins or weapons). You can even pick up people and toss 'em. "The combat mechanics take a page from many of my favorite side-scrollers," Provinciano shares. "Mario's enemy stomp, Sonic's speed shoes, tossing things around like in Super Mario Bros. 2 and River City Ransom—definitely some of my favorites."

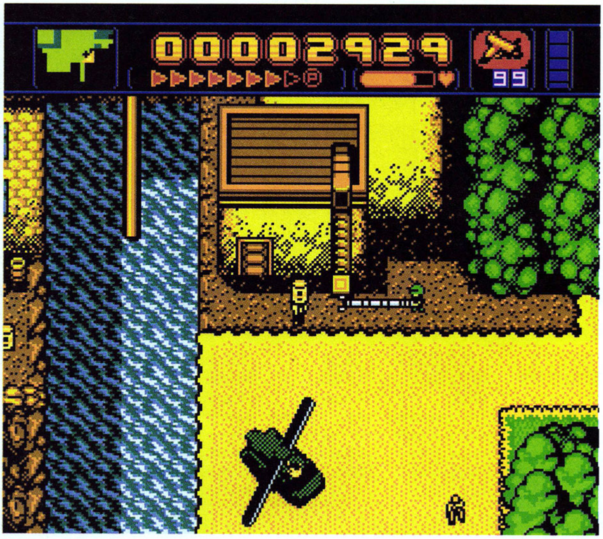
While there's plenty to see around the city—including sights that pay homage to everything from Urban Champion to Punch-Out!! to Ninja Gaiden to Earthworm Jim—the bulk of the gameplay is structured around an assortment of missions (more than 40 in all). When the game begins, you're an underling for The Jester, a criminal clown who stages a bank heist reminiscent of the one from *The Dark Knight*. In the first mission alone, you'll drive getaway vehicles, participate in shootouts, run through sewers that could be straight out of the Mushroom Kingdom, and dodge dangerous traffic, Frogger-style.

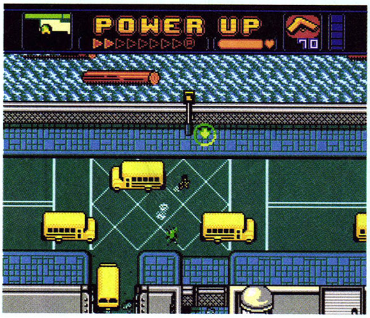
From there, you'll have the chance to provide your services to

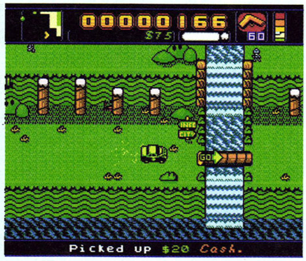




CHIEF O'FARVA: Rookie, which known super criminals are not currently in prison?







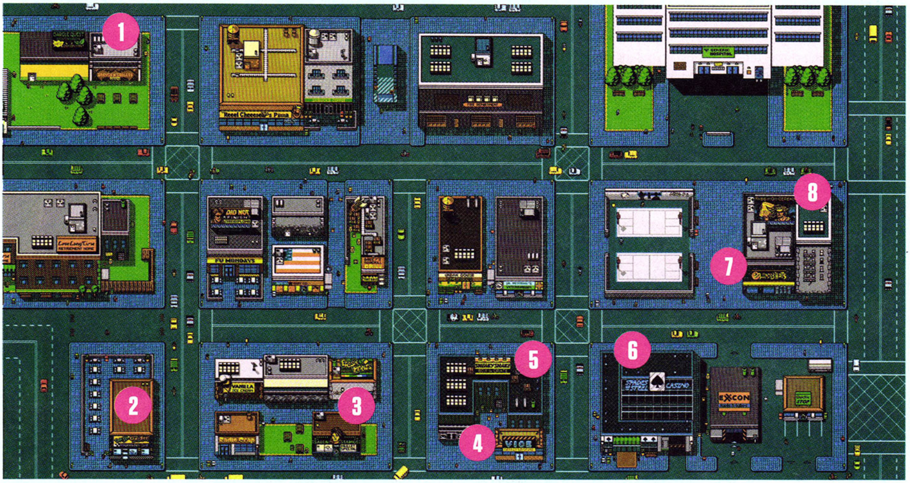
[Left] If you don't beat feet, you'll wind up as a street pizza like that poor frog.

a number of Theftropolis's most-wanted would-be criminal masterminds. "Like [in] GTA, the player does odd jobs for an assortment of [bad guys], but in this case, they're all either incompetent, careless, or pompous," Provinciano explains. "Nothing ever goes smoothly, and the protagonist comes to expect this, planning ahead for the next likely cliché."

As far as the gameplay goes, some of the missions follow the traditional GTA drive-and-shoot formula, while others are directly inspired by classic gaming experiences. "I just wasn't satisfied with the entire game being a variation of driving from A to B then shooting some enemies, so variety was incredibly important," notes Provinciano. "The Contraband Commando [mission] is among my favorites. It begins by infiltrating the military base, stealthily sneaking

WELCOME TO THEFTROPOLIS!

This retro city is a well-known crime capital that has been ruled by violence and death (and parody) for many years. Here are some of the amusing sights you'll encounter in a small portion of the city.



GRAVES 'N' GOBLETS PUB

1 GRAVES 'N' GOBLETS PUB
After you've rescued the princess from the ghosts and goblins, stop by the pub. Then the story will be happy end!

Baja Gaiden
Ryukenden Grill

2 BAJA GAIDEN RYUKENDEN GRILL
This restaurant is surely a favorite eatery of Ryu Hayabusa from Ninja Gaiden.

SALON STAMOS
MULLET SPECIAL

3 SALON STAMOS
You have to admit—*Full House* star John Stamos was always well-coifed.

VICE
DEFECT BROOMS

4 VICE DEFECT BROOMS
Is this a reference to obscure NES game (and Nintendo Power Vol. 24 cover story) Vice: Project Doom? We're pretty sure it is.

SNEAKY SNAKE
BOX & CRATE

5 SNEAKY SNAKE BOX & CRATE
We hear these crates are great for storing your old, rusty, metal gears.

SPADES of STEEL
CASINO

6 SPADES OF STEEL CASINO
When you're through wasting your money, you might feel strangely compelled to play Konami's classic hockey game Blades of Steel.

WONDERHATS

7 WONDERHATS
There's no mistaking this nod to the fondly remembered Thundercats toy line.

FABBY-O'S CEREAL

8 FABBY-O'S CEREAL
Fans of NES adventure Ironsword will especially enjoy this cereal. It's best topped with a dollop of I Can't Believe It's Not Butter.

into the back of a truck. Once in, you'll march up through enemy lines, dodging fire from enemies and cannons. Hop into the green jeep, blast the prisoner out of the hangar, then head to the chopper! No easy escape—the BioniCop swings off a lamppost and shoots you down. Boss fight! Another [mission] involves running down a half-pipe with the speed shoes, plowing through dozens of blue, spiky-haired enemies, and collecting coins while dodging bumpers. Get out of there before the base blows! Some of the more arcade-style missions involve dodge, catch, and toss gameplay."

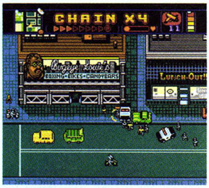
Other missions allow you to team up with a pirate to pillage Primate Peninsula, dive underwater to exterminate turtles for a cheese-grating supervillain, grab a ride with a time-traveling mad scientist, exorcise ghosts from a haunted car, and assist the persecuted principal of Bayshore High. As you can probably tell, video games aren't the only medium parodied in Retro City Rampage; movies and TV shows are also fair game.

"[The game is] an homage to all of my childhood favorites," Provinciano confesses. "*Ghostbusters, Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, Dick Tracy, Batman, Bill & Ted, Saved By the Bell,* and *Fresh Prince* ruled my childhood. [The game has] received an extra boost of the '80s."

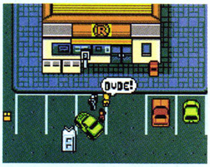
In addition, players can look forward to the appearance of a crack commando unit (possibly sent to prison by a military court for a crime they didn't commit) known as the T-Squad. "Purely out of coincidence," comments Provinciano, "you'll find them driving a black-and-red van. Their Mohawk-strutting, bling-wearing leader, Magnum T, packs fists of fury that'll send you flying!"

In between missions you can sell items to a pawnshop, buy beverages to restore your health, listen to different radio stations, trim your mullet, change your clothes, track down collectible packages, and engage in timed combat challenges. You can also stock up on a wide variety of weapons—20 in all—including a baseball bat, a nightstick, a sword (which you obtain from a guy in a cave à la The Legend of Zelda), a golf club, a scythe, a boomerang, a pistol, a shotgun (with spread-shot action), a machine gun, a flamethrower, grenades, and dynamite.

"The BioClaw, rocket launcher, and a supersecret orange weapon [are my favorites]," reveals Provinciano. "The BioClaw lets you fling enemies around, and with enough practice, into each other. When invincible, you can literally bounce off the walls while destroying the city using the rocket launcher. I can't decide what's more fun—blowing things up or launching myself around like a ping-pong ball."



[Below] Strange things are afoot at the Circle R.



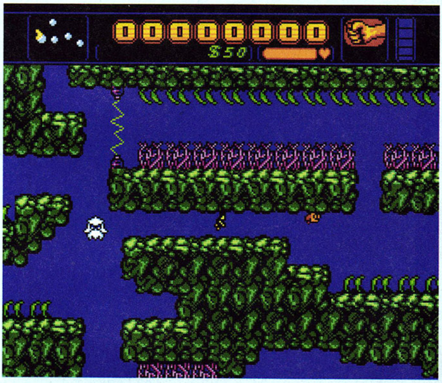
Ratcheting up the game's appeal is a healthy dose of 8-bit authenticity. The graphic engine limits the pixel size and color palette just like in the NES games of yesteryear, and the music and sound effects are likewise of vintage quality. Provinciano took a few liberties with the visuals and audio, however, to eliminate some of the drawbacks of classic gaming. Retro City Rampage allows for a greater number of sprites onscreen, adds more pixels to accommodate modern television aspect ratios, and permits music and sound effects to play simultaneously without any audio dropout. "For the record," Provinciano adds, "I did experiment with the flicker simulation, but believe me, it's not something you would enjoy...."

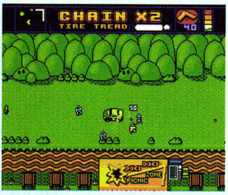
Furthermore, the developer is tuning the gameplay and difficulty to be more in tune with modern sensibilities. Remarks Provinciano, "Great design is led by the golden question of, 'Is it fun?' To that, I add a second question: 'Is it annoying, frustrating or cumbersome?' The latter is key to tightening up classic game experiences. As much as we love those old games, we were a lot more forgiving back then."

To top it all off, Retro City Rampage is being designed with significant replayability in mind. Not only can many missions be played repeatedly to achieve a new best time or high score, but the game will include an action-focused arcade mode to ensure that players will enjoy plentiful 8-bit shenanigans even after the credits roll.

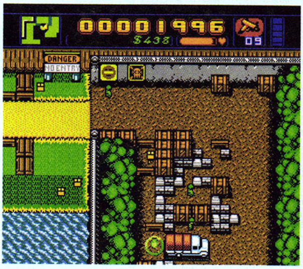
Retro City Rampage has been years in the making, but Provinciano hopes that all the hard work will soon pay off. "I'm still as passionate about the project as the day I started—probably even more so now—but it'll be a huge weight off my shoulders," he admits. "I can't wait for it to be in everyone's hands and to hear their reactions."

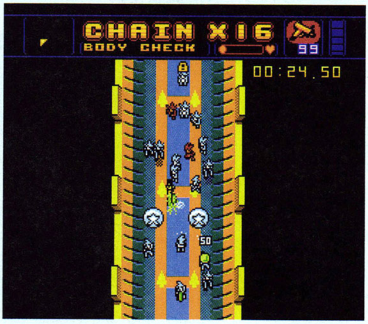
If all goes according to schedule, Retro City Rampage should be out by the end of 2010. '80s icons, be warned—your world may never be the same again. —**CHRIS H.**





[Above] Who's the no-good jerk planting bombs next to the dam? Oh, right—it's you.



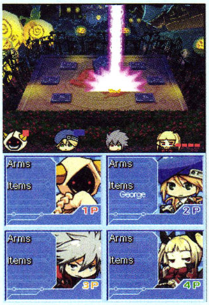


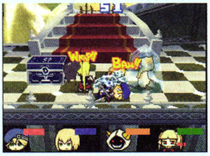
Baby Bloo

Four-player fighting doesn't get much crazier or cuter than **BlayzBloo: Super Melee Brawlers Battle Royale** for DSiWare.

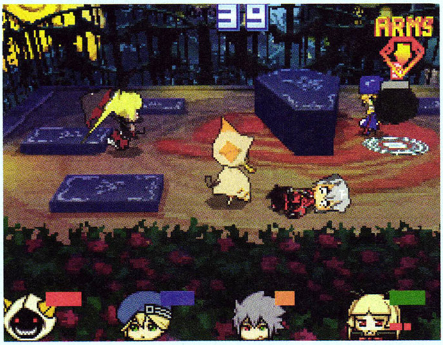
IT NEVER HIT Nintendo platforms, but last year's BlazBlue: Calamity Trigger was one of the most exciting 2-D fighting games to come along in a while. (The fact that it was developed by the folks behind the Guilty Gear franchise, Arc System Works, certainly didn't hurt.) Now Nintendo DSi owners will get a little—albeit much less hardcore—taste of BlazBlue with BlayzBloo: Super Melee Brawlers Battle Royale. With a roster composed of five fighters from BlazBlue—Ragna, Jin, Noel, Rachel, and Taokaka—this Aksys-published title takes a very different tack than its sibling. For one, it's a polygonal four-player (via local wireless) arena-based title with charmingly cutesy cel-shaded combatants. For another, it's not really a fighting game in the traditional sense.

Sure, one of the game's three modes, Life Match, is won by outliving your competitors, but the other two modes are a little less conventional. Point Match has you bashing your opponents to collect items—bowls of soba-noodle soup that are worth a varying number of points—that pop out of your foes when they are struck; whoever has the most points when the timer expires claims victory. Then there's Flag Match, in which the winner is the one who holds the "flag"—a tiny panda—when the time runs out. At a minute apiece, all three of these match types are over quickly, but that adds to the game's frantic nature. And things get really crazy when items such as bombs, bowling balls, and Super Mario Bros.-esque mushrooms are thrown into the mix. You'll be able to experience the madness for yourself soon (it might even be available as you read this). **—JUSTIN C.**





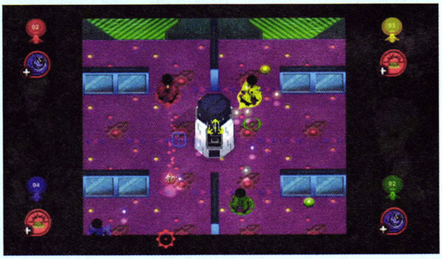
How do you make a four-player fighter even more frenetic? Add explosives.



Battle of the Boogie Knights

There's a duel at the disco! We check out **Frobot**'s multiplayer versus mode.

BACK IN VOL. 251 we brought you a preview of Frobot—the funkadelic action/adventure/puzzle WiiWare game starring an afro-wearing robot from another dimension. In that article we focused on the game's 25-stage single-player mode, but that's only part of the story; we recently got to duke it out in the game's competitive "Multiplaya" mode. Like in Wii Play Tanks, each player moves their own color-coded Frobot using the Control Stick on the Nunchuk controller and aims by pointing at the screen with the Wii Remote. The action escalates to pure chaos pretty quickly. Not only do your standard energy-gun attacks ricochet off walls (meaning that you can easily destroy yourself if you aren't careful), but you also have four hazardous special weapons to contend with: missiles, mines, bombs, and the Jive Stalker (a glittery, explosive disco ball that you guide with the remote). The 10 battle arenas make the combat even trickier; they're equipped with hazards and features such as bottomless pits, destructible walls, warp gates, exploding canisters, and moving platforms. The Frobot left standing at the end goes home with one of his robotic lady-friends, while the others lie smoldering in the disco inferno. **—CHRIS H.**



Get down, get funky, and get blown to pieces in frantic four-player action.

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EVALUATION STATION

WiiWARE

5 ARCADE GEMS

PUBLISHER: **NORDCURRENT**
GENRE: **ACTION**
Wii POINTS: **700**

Not actually an arcade-game collection, this quintet of minigames does indeed have *some* gems, but also some duds. Templar Bashing is simple fun with four knights jumping over and swatting a rotating mace. Lumberjack Trials is a shooting gallery-style game that takes advantage of the remote's pointer (although the targets move faster than the projectiles in advanced stages). Less successful are a dizzying shooter and an RC-car game with vehicles that can't reverse their gears. —**GEORGE S.**

Hmmm...

WiiWARE

BANG ATTACK

PUBLISHER: **ENGINE SOFTWARE**
GENRE: **PUZZLE**
Wii POINTS: **500**

Bang Attack is supposed to be puzzle game in which you blast clusters of icons (fruit, casino paraphernalia, etc.) to clear away tiles. "Puzzle game," however, implies that there's some mental challenge involved, and you'll find none here. There's no strategy required, and you can pretty much button-mash your way through the entire game. There's not even a time limit, which ensures you'll have little trouble racking up a new high score. —**CHRIS H.**

Grumble Grumble

WiiWARE

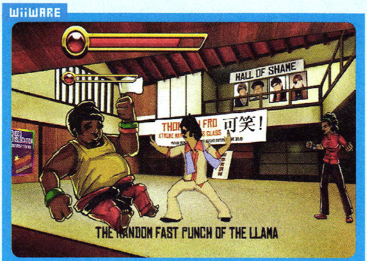
BRAIN DRAIN

PUBLISHER: **ENJOY GAMING**
GENRE: **PUZZLE**
Wii POINTS: **500**

Animal icons are jumbled on a grid. Your goal is to put them in a set order by rotating groups of four. Though there are 200 prearranged puzzles in the main game mode, as the patterns change and new icons are introduced, the puzzles don't increase in difficulty so much as they become more time-consuming. The process seems more like busywork than puzzle solving. Time is an element, though, so you may challenge yourself by shaving seconds off repeated plays. —**GEORGE S.**

Grumble Grumble

WiiWARE



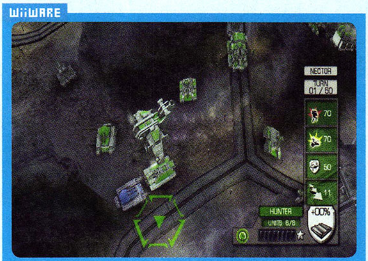
KUNG FU FUNK: EVERYBODY IS KUNG FU FIGHTING!

PUBLISHER: **STICKMEN STUDIOS** GENRE: **ALTERNATIVE** Wii POINTS: **500**

Kung fu is awesome. Funk is awesome. This much we know. Unfortunately, with the exception of Carl Douglas's classic track, "Kung Fu Fighting," this game features neither kung fu nor funk. Sure, it's got a kung fu theme, but make no mistake: Kung Fu Funk is a half-assed trick designed to make you wave your arms. All you'll find here is a collection of lame-brained, nonfighting minigames sporting disastrous (sometimes broken) controls. (You'll spend most of your time swinging the Wii Remote and Nunchuk in prescribed directions.) Best to get your kung fu and funk the old-fashioned ways, via *Drunken Master* and Parliament-Funkadelic. —**PATRICK C.**

Grumble Grumble

WiiWARE



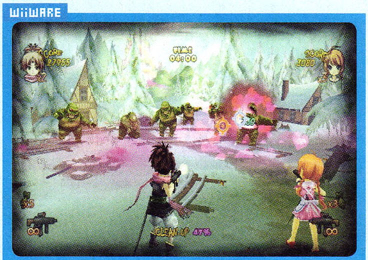
MILITARY MADNESS: NECTARIS

PUBLISHER: **HUDSON** GENRE: **STRATEGY** Wii POINTS: **1,000**

The original Military Madness was one of the best offerings on TurboGrafx16, which makes this lazy remake a major disappointment. Completely void of new features in single-player mode, the turn-based gameplay is sure to feel antiquated to newcomers and offers nothing fresh to returning fans. It's also more confusing than it needs to be. The operations manual does a very poor job of explaining the HUD, and it hardly even touches on the differences between unit types. I'm not sure I'd choose these "upgraded" visuals over the original version's sprites, either. I realize the game takes place on the moon, but does everything have to look so grey and lifeless? —**STEVE T.**

Grumble Grumble

WiiWARE



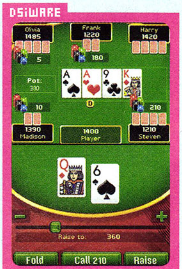
ZOMBIE PANIC IN WONDERLAND

PUBLISHER: **AKAONI** GENRE: **SHOOTER** Wii POINTS: **1,000**

There's a lot to like about Zombie Panic in Wonderland. The graphics are stunning (it's easily one of the best-looking WiiWare games), the anime-style character designs are excellent, and the action is nonstop. I don't think I let up on the trigger button the entire time I was playing. The story is also deliciously goofy—who can resist seeing fairytale characters blast away legions of the undead? There's a lot to shoot, and the destructible environments are very cool, but the pacing is a bit off; less-resistant but more-plentiful foes would have made for a more satisfying game. Still, this is a solid shooter, especially if you play it in co-op. —**CHRIS H.**

Recommended

DSiWARE



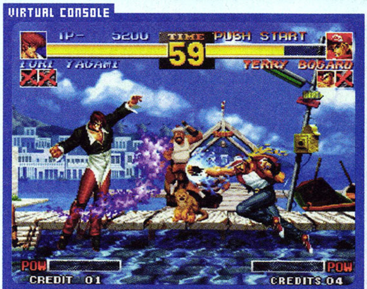
7 CARD GAMES

PUBLISHER: **CERASUS.MEDIA**
GENRE: **CARD**
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: **500**

This collection's two poker games, three variations on solitaire, and hearts and blackjack iterations don't have bells or whistles. But control is solid, the AI is strong, and the graphics are easy to read. If you have a hankering for a card game, you don't need anything else. —**GEORGE S.**

Recommended

VIRTUAL CONSOLE



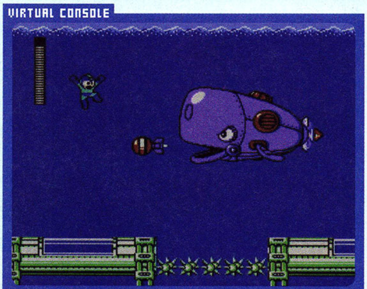
THE KING OF FIGHTERS '95

PLATFORM: **NEOGEO** PUBLISHER: **D4 ENTERPRISE/SNK**
GENRE: **FIGHTING** ORIGINAL RELEASE: **1995**

Although the graphics haven't held up that well and the game can be frustratingly cheap, I still like The King of Fighters '95. It's partially for superficial reasons, as this iteration—the second in the KOF series—introduced fan-favorite characters Iori Yagami and Omega Rugal. While the great roster of distinct characters is a big draw, though, the main reason why I like KOF '95 is its solid fighting mechanics. However, the 900-Wii-Points asking price is a bit steep, especially since KOF '95 is included in the still-available, budget-priced The King of Fighters Collection: The Orochi Saga for Wii. —**JUSTIN C.**

Recommended

VIRTUAL CONSOLE



MEGA MAN 4

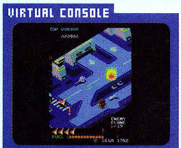
PLATFORM: **NES** PUBLISHER: **CAPCOM**
GENRE: **ACTION** ORIGINAL RELEASE: **1992**

Chris H's Pick

Mega Man 4 is the entry in which the series really found its comfort zone. There are a few new wrinkles, naturally—this was the title that introduced the ability to charge up Mega Man's arm cannon—but this game doesn't add a lot to the tried-and-true formula of running and jumping through levels, fighting robot bosses, and obtaining their weapons. When the basic gameplay is already so good, however, it's hard to complain. The control is excellent, the music rocks, and the challenge is spot-on.

Recommended

VIRTUAL CONSOLE



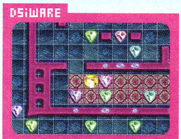
ZAXXON

PLATFORM: **ARCADE**
PUBLISHER: **SEGA**
GENRE: **SHOOTER**
ORIGINAL RELEASE: **1982**

Old-timers are likely to remember Zaxxon from the early days of the arcade. Those fancy isometric graphics were a big deal back then, and they made this title stand out. It's a pity that the gameplay doesn't hold up as well as that of other classic shooters like Galaga, though. That nifty perspective often makes maneuvering your ship and aiming a frustrating experience. Zaxxon is still fun, but probably not as fun as you recall. —**PHIL T.**

Hmmm...

DSiWARE



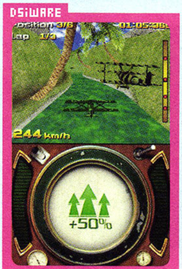
1001 CRYSTAL MAZES COLLECTION

PUBLISHER: **TEYON**
GENRE: **PUZZLE**
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: **500**

The challenge in Crystal Mazes is that you can only push—not pull—gems as you navigate them through tight passages. You can, however, undo steps if you get stuck in a corner. Some duds in the 1001 mazes give you more tedium than puzzle solving, but most balance out the mundanity with genuine head-scratching. The interface is a bit odd, though, and the instructions are lacking. —**GEORGE S.**

Hmmm...

DSiWARE



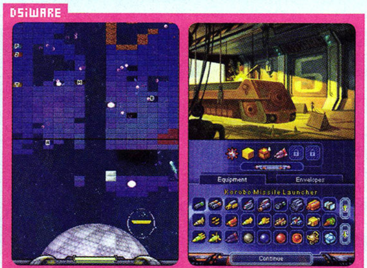
AIRACE

PUBLISHER: **QUBICGAMES**
GENRE: **RACING**
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: **800**

AiRace: Tunnel, AiRace's predecessor, was...not good. Fortunately, QubicGames is ready to make amends, treating air racers to top-notch graphics, a tasty selection of planes, ambitious (and varied) race environments, and a feature set that screams, "repeat play!" —**PATRICK C.**

Recommended

DSiWARE



ALPHABOUNCE

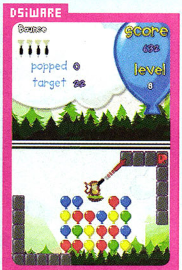
PUBLISHER: **MAD MONKEY STUDIOS** GENRE: **ACTION**
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: **500**

Phil T's Pick

AlphaBounce greatly expands on the standard Arkanoid-style block-breaking formula by wrapping the core gameplay around an extensive adventure mode. Not only is there a seemingly endless number of action-packed stages, but there are ample opportunities to upgrade both your paddle and your ball thanks to a plethora of power-ups that will occasionally rain down on you, dozens at a time. Mad Monkey Studios has breathed new life into this classic genre by adding a surprising amount of depth. The load times between stages can be a bummer, but it's a small complaint.

Recommended

DSiWARE



BLOONS

PUBLISHER: **HANDS-ON MOBILE**
GENRE: **PUZZLE**
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: **500**

The WiiWare version of Bloons had an OK concept—you throw darts to pop a certain quota of balloons—but it wasn't executed very well. Fortunately, the DSiWare version is much improved thanks to the touch screen-centric control scheme. Too bad the game as a whole still isn't that great. —**JUSTIN C.**

Hmmm...

EVALUATION STATION

DSiWARE

BOUNCE & BREAK

PUBLISHER: **ENJOY GAMING**
GENRE: **PUZZLE**
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: **500**

In this run-of-the-mill block-breaking game, new bricks constantly move down from the top of the screen, making the stages last so long that they become boring. The action isn't helped by spotty physics that have your ball taking occasional wild bounces off of the paddle and bricks. —**PHIL T.**

Grumble Grumble

DSiWARE

CRAZY GOLF

PUBLISHER: **DTP ENTERTAINMENT**
GENRE: **SPORTS**
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: **500**

Don't dismiss Crazy Golf because it lacks any resemblance to actual golf. You'll miss out on a nice little obstacle course with spot-on physics and great control. The overhead view, however, is informative, but not very interesting. The seven sets of six courses each rely too much on steering your blue marble around decoy holes, and the paths are too meandering, but it is fun to fling the marble at household objects and hope for a lucky bounce. —**GEORGE S.**

Hmmm...

DSiWARE

DODOGO!

PUBLISHER: **NEKO ENTERTAINMENT** GENRE: **PLATFORMER**
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: **800**

DodoGo! asks players to prolong the inevitable by shepherding stray dodo eggs back to their nests. Fortunately, this particular exercise in futility is worth a few reps, as the puzzle engine shows heroic depth. Play consists of guiding multiple eggs through varied platform locales. In addition to moving said eggs, players deploy a clever array of terrain-shaping tools (single-use bridges, spring-loaded platforms, etc.). Environmental and time-based hazards (such as hostile animals) only complicate matters for would-be dodos. Rudimentary Tamagotchi mechanics that are, incredibly, *not* pointless make for still more strategy. The price may seem a bit steep, but this bird undeniably has wings. —**PATRICK C.**

Recommended

DSiWARE

DON'T FEED THE ANIMALS

PUBLISHER: **ELECTRON JUMP**
GENRE: **STRATEGY**
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: **500**

When it comes to defense, I like mine tower-style. That said, Don't Feed the Animals is little more than a dingleberry on the genre's furry hindquarters. Hair-brained strategy, obstructed visuals, and chaotic stampeding do not a good time make. —**PATRICK C.**

Grumble Grumble

DSiWARE

FERRARI GT: EVOLUTION

PUBLISHER: **GAMELOFT** GENRE: **RACING** NINTENDO DSi POINTS: **800**

Trying to feel like a simulation but ultimately leaning to the arcadey side, Ferrari GT: Evolution is a fun racing game that is pretty fully featured for a downloadable title. In addition to the Quick Race mode, there's a fairly robust Career mode in which you participate in races in order to acquire experience (granting you access to better races) and credits (with which you can purchase new cars). For a game that is entirely Ferrari-based, there's an impressive array of vehicles to choose from; you can drive 32 different models from the past and present. Of course, that wouldn't matter if the gameplay didn't work; fortunately, the game is solid in this department, too, though the title feels a tad too easy on the whole. —**JUSTIN C.**

Recommended

DSiWARE

GANGSTAR 2: KINGS OF L.A.

PUBLISHER: **GAMELOFT** GENRE: **ADVENTURE** NINTENDO DSi POINTS: **800**

There's no other way to put it—Gangstar 2: Kings of L.A. is a Grand Theft Auto clone. The game even apes one of the most significant (and controversial) features of the M-rated Chinatown Wars: the drug-trade aspect. Gangstar 2's version of this, however, has you buying and selling candy (including mints, chocolates, and lollipops) in order to make money. This isn't necessarily a bad thing in theory—Chinatown Wars is a great game, after all, and imitation *is* the sincerest form of flattery—but Gangstar 2 doesn't execute the idea well. Actually, Gangstar 2 doesn't execute a lot of things well; the driving and shooting don't feel as solid as they should be, and the story and stereotypical characters aren't very compelling. —**JUSTIN C.**

Hmmm...

DSiWARE

PUFFINS: LET'S ROLL

PUBLISHER: **OTHER OCEAN**
GENRE: **PUZZLE**
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: **500**

Puffins: Let's Roll dares you to flick your stylus far, far too many times to roll an absurdly dense egg through drab obstacle courses. Whether you're racing or collecting fish (huh?), your eyes will do most of the rolling. —**PATRICK C.**

Grumble Grumble

DSiWARE

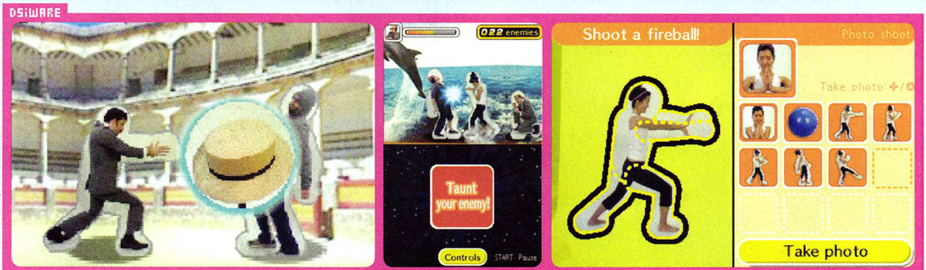


PHOTO DOJO

PUBLISHER: **NINTENDO** GENRE: **FIGHTING** NINTENDO DSi POINTS: **0 (THROUGH JUNE 10); 200 (AFTER JUNE 10)**

Photo Dojo is a game that everybody should try. And given the cost—it's free for the first month after release, and a mere 200 Nintendo DSi Points after that—there's no excuse not to. But even at a higher price, Photo Dojo would be worth your while. That's not because it has fantastic fighting mechanics or astounding play control, but because of just how hilariously entertaining it is.

What makes it so amusing, of course, is that you get to create all of the characters using photos taken with the Nintendo DSi Camera. The cast includes you, your friends, your siblings, your parents, your teacher, your pets, your action figures, your pencil sketches—you're pretty much limited only by your imagination (and how willing your acquaintances are to be photographed in a variety of goofy poses). Taking the photos is the least-fun part of the game, though—it's time-consuming as well as awkward to assume some of the poses. And don't even try to take pictures of yourself; you're much better off having a friend help you out. After shooting the pics, you get to record an assortment of accompanying sound effects; choosing the right voice clips can add a lot to the experience.

Once you've made a few characters and snapped a background photo or two, it's time to head into battle. The action might be a little simplistic and rough around the edges, but that's not the point—the point is that you're playing as your five-year-old sister who's walking across a bookshelf yelling, "I pity the fool!" as she blasts Uncle Scott with a cantaloupe. Sure, there's room for improvement—it's a bummer that you can't trade your custom characters with friends, and versus mode requires two players to awkwardly share the same system—but few games can offer as much laugh-out-loud zaniness. —**CHRIS H.**

Recommended

DSiWARE

SCRABBLE SLAM!
RACE

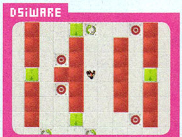
SCRABBLE SLAM

PUBLISHER: **ELECTRONIC ARTS**
GENRE: **PUZZLE**
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: **500**

Based on the card game of the same name, Scrabble Slam is a word game that's all about speed. You're racing to get rid of all of your letter cards by creating new words out of a single starting word. Drag and drop an *i* card on the word "slam," for example, and it becomes "slim." Scrabble Slam is fast-paced and fun, and you can play with up to three friends (though they all have to buy the game first), but I'm not sure there's enough here to warrant its price tag. —**JUSTIN C.**

Hmmm...

DSiWARE



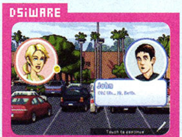
SOKOMANIA

PUBLISHER: **CINEMAX**
GENRE: **PUZZLE**
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: **200**

Sokomania brings the classic warehouse-keeper game Sokoban to Nintendo DSi. Each level places players in a tile maze then tasks them with pushing crates into designated locations. The pure puzzle premise has appeal, but this implementation is woeful; there's no camera control, so players must move in-game (losing points and displacing crates) to see the whole field at times. Additionally, the game packs only 30 levels; that's a mighty small warehouse. —**PATRICK C.**

Grumble Grumble

DSiWARE



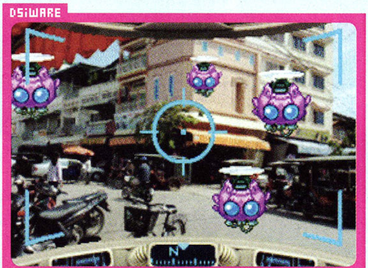
SURVIVING HIGH SCHOOL

PUBLISHER: **ELECTRONIC ARTS**
GENRE: **ADVENTURE**
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: **800**

As an adventure/dating sim, Surviving High School involves a lot of reading and little gameplay beyond a few simple minigames. The characters are fairly amusing and the story can be pretty funny at times, but there simply aren't enough options to keep things interesting for long. Do you date the cheerleader or the goth chick? Those are your only choices. You can't even choose your gender. Have fun playing as a dude, ladies! —**PHIL T.**

Hmmm...

DSiWARE



SYSTEM FLAW RECRUIT

PUBLISHER: **ENJOY GAMING** GENRE: **SHOOTER** NINTENDO DSi POINTS: **500**

If you missed the retail release of the original System Flaw, don't feel bad. The game had no hype whatsoever and anyone who did notice it was probably repulsed by the idiotic box art. If you did, by some accident, play the game, you would have found a unique Nintendo DSi-exclusive shooter that uses the system's camera to track your motions and has you actually spin your body around to target enemies; it's goofy but kind of neat, and unlike a lot of gimmicks it really works. Unfortunately, this Recruit version is a glorified demo, containing a dozen short training missions and a lame time-trial challenge. If you're curious about the packaged game, give this a shot, but don't expect anything substantial. —**CHRIS H.**

Hmmm...

IN THIS SECTION

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DS PREVIEWS

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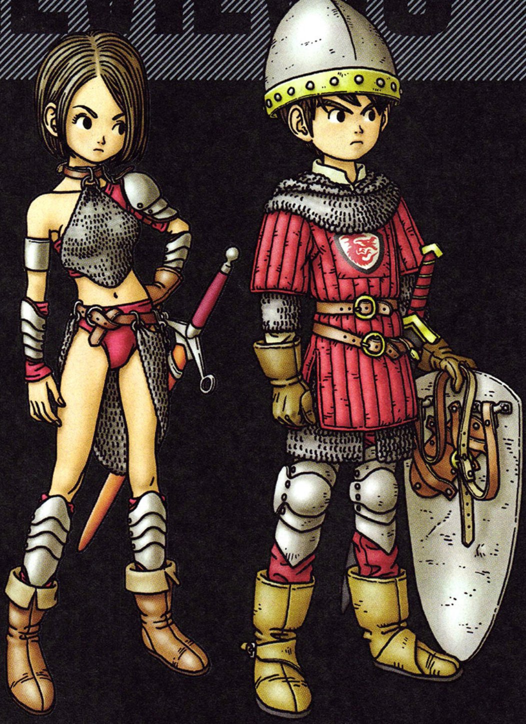
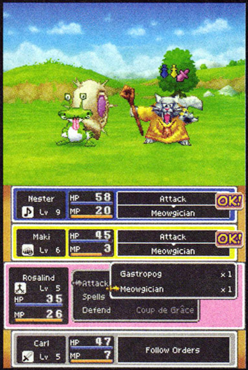
THE LAST AIRBENDER pg.44
RIVER CITY SUPER SPORTS CHALLENGE pg.45



DRAGON QUEST IX: SENTINELS OF THE STARRY SKIES

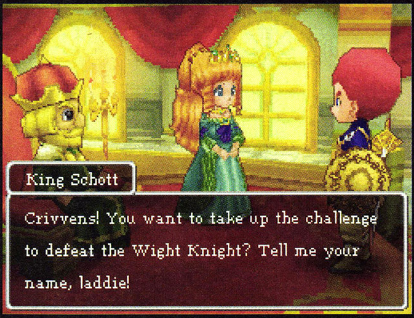
Tag—you're rich!

THE VENERABLE Dragon Quest series has rarely been on the cutting edge of anything—it didn't even fully embrace 3-D until four years ago. But in building the newest chapter around the Wi-Fi capabilities of the Nintendo DS handheld, Dragon Quest creator Yuji Horii has placed the series at the very forefront of casual multiplayer gaming. Japanese fans responded enthusiastically to the new features, making Dragon Quest IX the region's best-selling game of 2009 and the best-selling Dragon Quest ever. This summer, American RPG fans will finally get to see what makes this DS-exclusive installment so inventive.



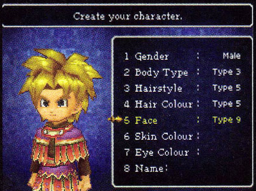
First and foremost, Dragon Quest IX allows up to four players to team up over a local wireless connection. The multiplayer options aren't restricted to some side mode; after a brief opening chapter, players are free to play through the entire game with their friends and loved ones watching their backs. Unlike other games that offer multiplayer with severe restrictions such as forcing the characters to stay in the same area, Dragon Quest IX allows players to split up, explore different areas, and even fight different battles at the same time. Lest a player get lost or run into trouble, the host of the game has the ability to summon his friends to his side at any time.

A well-implemented multiplayer feature is nothing to sneeze at, but in Japan it was Dragon Quest IX's clever implementation of Tag mode that emerged as the breakout hit. In the game's central city of Stornway, players help establish a giant hotel that serves as the hub for all of the game's multiplayer features. At any time, players can choose to "Canvass for Guests," which involves putting your Nintendo DS into sleep mode by closing the lid. As you go about your daily life with your DS in your backpack or pocket, the system will exchange information with the DS systems of other Dragon Quest IX players who are also canvassing for guests. When you next fire up your DS,



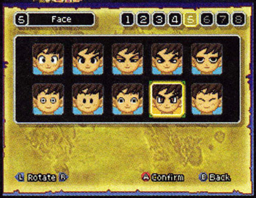
King Schott

Crivvens! You want to take up the challenge to defeat the Wight Knight? Tell me your name, laddie!



Create your character.

1 Gender : Male
2 Body Type : Type 3
3 Hairstyle : Type 5
4 Hair Colour : Type 5
5 Face : Type 9
6 Skin Colour :
7 Eye Colour :
8 Name:



[Right] Dragon Quest IX lets you create not only your main character from scratch, but also your additional party members. You get to choose how your characters look and select their job classes.

you'll find those players' heroes are now guests at your hotel.

The exciting part is that guests often come bearing gifts. The world of Dragon Quest IX is full of hidden dungeons that can be located only with treasure maps, the first of which you'll receive in an in-game quest. Follow the map to the red X, and you'll discover a randomly generated dungeon with unique bosses and rare loot at the end. If you find an especially good map—one that leads to a dungeon with a great weapon or money-rich gold golems—you can set it so that your hero will share it with other players while staying at their hotels. This feature became so popular in Japan that for weeks after the game's release, players would congregate at certain game stores, fast-food restaurants, and train stations to trade maps. Or they'd simply "canvass for guests" on their daily commutes, earning dozens of treasure maps from unseen strangers on the train or bus.

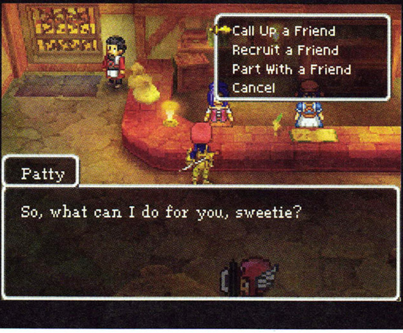
Dragon Quest IX also has a lot to offer as a single-player experience. The game looks spectacular, with 3-D environments and models that rival a lot of home-console games. Players who are going it solo can create their entire party, hand-picking their gear from among 1,000-plus different armaments, each of which has a unique in-game appearance. A system of selectable vocations (warrior, thief, martial artist, mage, etc.) adds a bit of depth to the usual Dragon Quest battle system, and for the first time enemies are visible on the world map so that players can pick fights or avoid them as they choose.

We'll be bringing you a deeper look at the long-awaited North American version of Dragon Quest IX next month. All we ask in return is that if you get a good map—say, the one with all those high-EXP Metal Slimes—you flip on Tag mode and share the love. —CASEY L.

PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
DEVELOPER: SQUARE ENIX/LEVEL 5
DS
RELEASE: JULY 2010

The hexagoon attacks.

[Below] Visit the Stornway inn to recruit allies and team up with friends.



Call Up a Friend
Recruit a Friend
Part With a Friend
Cancel

Patty

So, what can I do for you, sweetie?

MADDEN NFL 11

An exciting new franchise opportunity

THE MADDEN SERIES has never really found its groove on the Wii console. Last year, the folks at EA Tiburon took the most radical steps yet toward truly tailoring the experience to Nintendo's unique platform. The developers got a lot of things right, but as they readily admit, they failed to capture their core audience. The biggest culprit? Their treatment of Franchise mode, long the bread and butter of the series. Players could access the mode only via a secret password, and those who did manage to unearth it were greeted with a simple roster update pasted on top of the previous year's interface and options.

This year, Franchise mode returns to the forefront with a new approach specific to Wii. Tiburon's goal is to present everything in a more visual, user-friendly manner without sacrificing any of the depth fans have come to expect. All of the mode's traditional options are present and accounted for, but rather than access them through a series of menus, you'll point and click at various facilities on your team's campus. It looks a bit like something out of SimCity; that comparison is crystallized by the fact that your performance will affect the installation's appearance (see the sidebar). For the first time ever, you're also given a concrete objective: to build your team's legacy until it's considered the greatest franchise of all time. Your progress is tracked in three categories—team performance, fan support, and finance—and measured against a list of such legendary teams as the '70s Steelers, the '80s 49ers, and the '90s Cowboys.

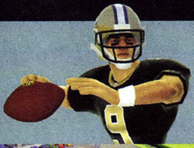
At the beginning of each season, expectations are set for all three categories, and if you fail to meet them, you could lose your job (though the game does give you the option to continue playing the franchise, even if you can no longer "win"). An assistant specializing in each category will help keep you off the hot seat, offering advice and providing updates on your progress. They'll also come to you with special scenarios from time to time. For example, the team trainer—who advises you on team performance—may notify you that a certain player has been showing up late for practice. If you decide to hit the offending player with a fine, you'll show that you mean business (and boost your finances in the process), but it could negatively affect his morale. Letting him off with a warning, on the other hand, might set a bad precedent for the rest of the team.

>

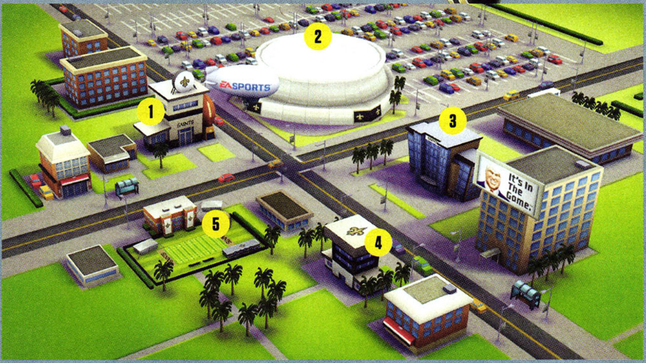
[Left] Neither snow nor rain nor gloom of night keeps Moss from the end zone.

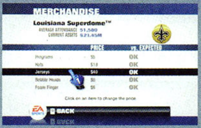
5 ON 5
5 ON 5
81
29

BIG MAN ON CAMPUS



Your team's campus provides a visual representation of your franchise. Here's a detailed look at the facilities.


1
2
3
4
5
EASPORTS
SAINTS
It's In The Game.


MERCHANDISE
BACK

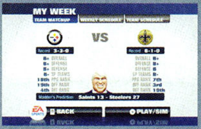
Louisiana Superdome™
AVERAGE ATTENDANCE 51,580
CURRENT ASSETS $21.45M

	PRICE	vs. EXPECTED
Programs	$5	OK
Hats	$18	OK
Jerseys	$40	OK
Bobble Heads	$8	OK
Foam Finger	$6	OK

Click on an item to change the price

1 Pro Shop

This is where all of the money management takes place. You'll use the pro shop to view income and expenses, as well as set prices for amenities like programs, jerseys, and foam fingers.

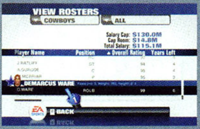

MY WEEK
TEAM MATCHUP
WEEKLY SCHEDULE
TEAM SCHEDULE
VS
BACK
PLAY/SIM

Record 3-3-0			Record 6-1-0
B+	OVERALL	OVERALL	B+
B+	OFFENSE	OFFENSE	B+
B+	DEFENSE	DEFENSE	B
B-	SP TEAMS	SP TEAMS	B-
18th	PPG RANK	PPG RANK	7th
19th	OFF RANK	OFF RANK	3rd
4th	DEF RANK	DEF RANK	10th

Madden's Prediction Saints 13 - Steelers 27

2 Stadium

By visiting the stadium, you can take a look at your team's upcoming schedule and its current place in the standings. This is also where you'll choose to play or simulate games.

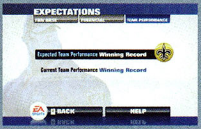

VIEW ROSTERS
COWBOYS
ALL
DEMARCUS WARE
BACK

Salary Cap: $130.0M
Cap Room: $14.8M
Total Salary: $115.1M

Player Name	Position	▲ Overall Rating	Years Left
J.RATLIFF	DT	94	4
A.GUROODE	C	95	4
M.MCBRIAR	P	95	3
D.WARE	ROLB	99	6

3 Front Office

Head to the front office to put on your general manager's hat and deal with personnel matters. You can view detailed breakdowns of your team, make trades, and negotiate with free agents.

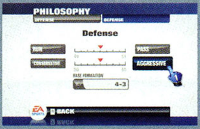

EXPECTATIONS
FAN BASE
FINANCIAL
TEAM PERFORMANCE
BACK
HELP

Expected Team Performance Winning Record

Current Team Performance Winning Record

4 Hall of Fame

The hall of fame keeps track of all your stats and your franchise's expectations for the season. You may also view your awards here, as well as your current ranking on the Legacy List.

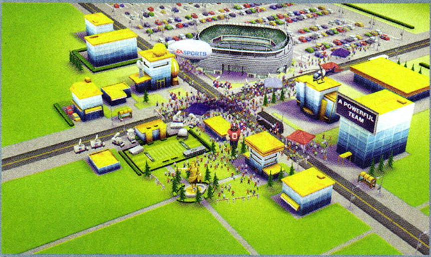

PHILOSOPHY
OFFENSE
DEFENSE
RUN
PASS
CONSERVATIVE
AGGRESSIVE
BACK

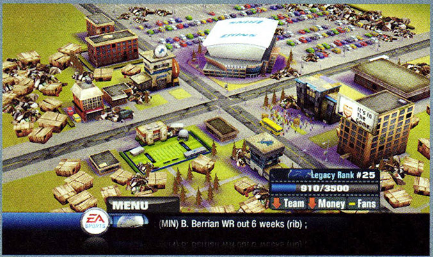
Defense

BASE FORMATION 4-3

5 Practice Facility

At the practice facility, you can tweak and tune your team's playbook and overall philosophy, make player substitutions, and even hit the field to test out new recruits or experiment with new plays.


EASPORTS
A POWERFUL TEAM


It's In The Game.
MENU
Team
Money
Fans

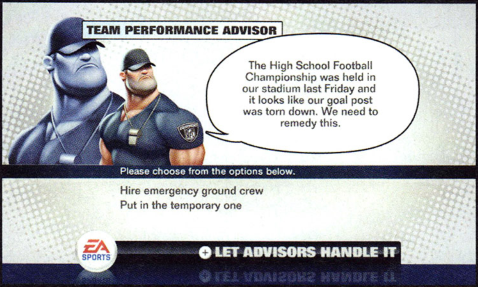
Legacy Rank #25

910/3500

(MIN) B. Berrian WR out 6 weeks (rib) ;

SimMadden

Your success—or lack thereof—in Franchise mode will be reflected in the appearance of the team's campus. If you do a good job and meet expectations, fans will line up around your stadium waiting for the next game, and all of your facilities will sparkle with gold plating. As you move up the Legacy List, you'll also earn rewards such as a private helicopter. Do poorly, however, and the fans will picket around your front office, demanding that you step down.



TEAM PERFORMANCE ADVISOR

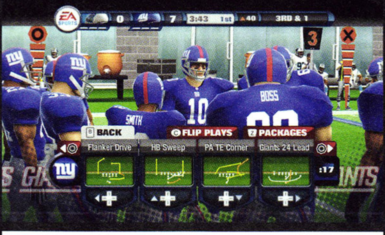
The High School Football Championship was held in our stadium last Friday and it looks like our goal post was torn down. We need to remedy this.

Please choose from the options below.

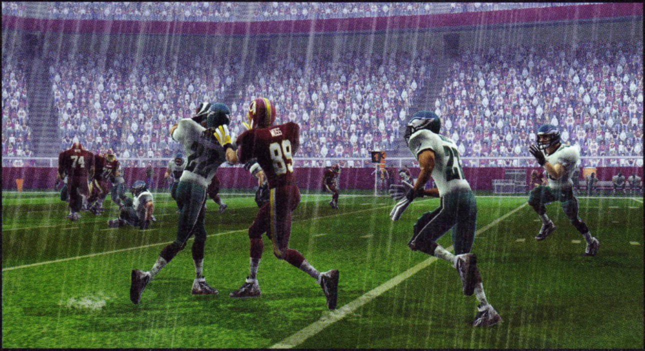
Hire emergency ground crew

Put in the temporary one

LET ADVISORS HANDLE IT



[Left] We hope "Let advisors handle it" really means "Send the team performance advisor to crack some skulls."



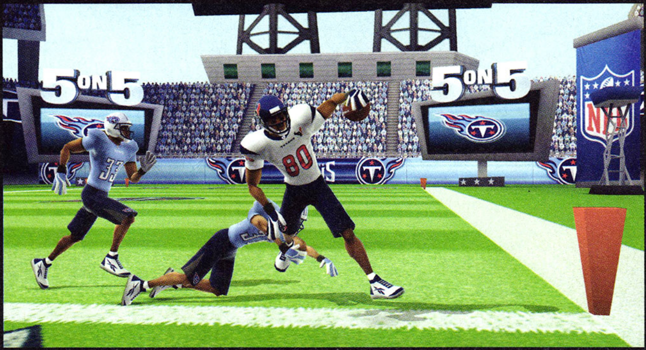
Whatever your decision, you can always look to trade the bum at the end of the year. You'll also participate in the draft, decide whether to sign free agents, and attend to other customary off-season business, though Tiburon has now separated the process into four stages in the hopes of making it easier to digest.

Owners who manage their franchises exceptionally well should be able to lead them to the top of the all-time list in four or five seasons, Tiburon estimates. After you've completed that objective, however, you can continue playing for a total of up to 30 years, just as in previous installments. Maybe Brett Favre will have finally decided to retire by then.

The other big feature being touted for Madden NFL 11 is called GameFlow, which has the AI choose all of your plays for you. Tiburon found that although most playbooks consist of more than 200 unique plays, your average Madden competitor uses only 13 over the course of an entire game. By leaving the *X*s and *O*s to the AI, you can cut the duration of a normal game in half—from 50 minutes to about 25 minutes. GameFlow eliminates the play-call screen entirely, illustrating your routes and assignments directly onto the field as you approach the line of scrimmage. You can call an audible if you're unhappy with the AI's selection, and you have the option to turn off GameFlow at any time. Of course, you can choose to call your own plays from the very beginning, as well.

The exaggerated visual style introduced in last year's game returns, albeit with a few enhancements. Special attention has been paid to inclement weather in particular. During a heavy downpour, for instance, you'll notice the splash of water beneath a runner's feet. In a snowstorm, the crowd will bundle up with scarves and heavy jackets. Jerseys get covered with dirt and mud over the course of a game, and the messy field affects the way players move. The developers have also added a bunch of new animations for spectacular catches, bone-jarring hits, and other moves worthy of the highlight reel.

If nothing else, Madden NFL 11 is certainly the most ambitious update the venerable series has seen in quite some time. We're anxious to try the fruits of that labor and, hopefully, lead the Vikings to 30 straight Super Bowls. —STEVE T.



PUBLISHER: **ELECTRONIC ARTS**

Wii DEVELOPER: **EA TIBURON**

RELEASE: **AUGUST 2010**

DRAGON BALL®
ORIGINS 2
AVAILABLE NOW!
FACE OFF AGAINST THE RED RIBBON ARMY!
TEAM UP WITH A FRIEND TO DEFEAT POWERFUL RIVALS!
UNLEASH AERIAL ATTACKS, LAND DEVASTATING COMBOS AND ACHIEVE NEW SKILLS!
TEEN
T
Blood
Cartoon Mischief
Mild Language
Suggestive Themes
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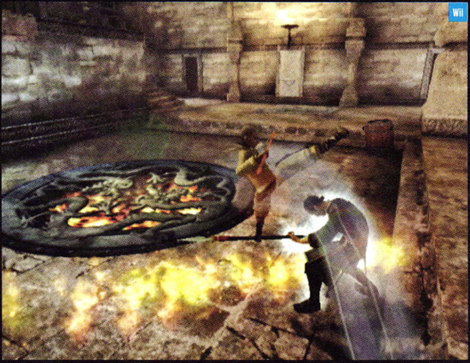
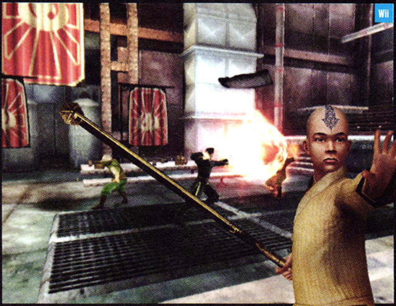




Aang [left] and Prince Zuko [above] each have their own unique moves.

THE LAST AIRBENDER

Bend the air. Fan the flames.

WHAT IS GOOD? What is evil? Sometimes it's hard to tell. In The Last Airbender for the Wii console and the Nintendo DS handheld, you'll get to see a story unfold from two differing viewpoints so you can make that judgment yourself. Based on M. Night Shyamalan's *The Last Airbender* movie (which is, in turn, based on the *Avatar: The Last Airbender* cartoon), the game puts you in control of both Aang (the title character who is destined to bring balance to the world) and Prince Zuko (an exiled royal of the aggressive Fire Nation who wants to capture Aang and bring him home in chains).

As young Aang you'll use impressive staff skills to bash Fire Nation soldiers, and manipulate the winds to not only attack enemies, but also to pick up objects (which can then be thrown, set down to trigger switches, or slammed to the ground should the need arise). Additionally, Aang can activate "insight mode," which lets him move superfast—essential for solving some of the game's puzzles that require you to remotely open a door then get through the door before it closes—and ride paths of wind emitted by special statues.

Zuko, meanwhile, is a bit less cerebral; his stages feature fewer puzzles and more straight-up combat as he clobbers foes with fireballs, flaming punches, and screen-clearing firebombs. If he's near a fire pillar, he can even enter a first-person mode that allows him to scorch enemies from afar. Zuko also gets to engage in Prince of Persia-esque platforming (he can climb walls by grabbing vines and certain rocks) and take advantage of stealth attacks to instantly dispatch unsuspecting foes.

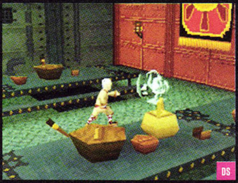
Despite the differences between the two characters, their destinies are intertwined; in the Wii game you'll often play through a stage as one character, then play through a modified version of the same stage as the other. At one point, for instance, you play as Zuko to infiltrate an enemy castle and rescue Aang (only so Zuko can recapture him, of course), after which you take control of Aang to flee the stronghold. As you escape you'll see Zuko running from the guards; too bad he doesn't stick around to help you defeat the level boss, a Fire Nation tank.

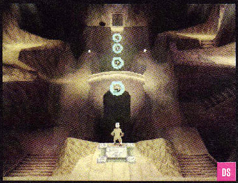
While the Wii version is a fairly realistic-looking third-person action-adventure, the DS game is on the cartoony side and utilizes more of a top-down perspective. It adds several RPG elements to the mix, as well, including nonlinear levels, side quests, collectibles that extend your health or chi, upgradeable special moves, and numerous nonplayable characters with whom you can interact. The game is almost entirely touch-controlled, too; although you must hold L or R to enter a combat stance, you use the touch screen for moving, fighting, conversing, and unleashing your elemental powers.

When the winds of change collide with the flames of war, what will be the ultimate outcome? We'll find out when The Last Airbender is released this summer.

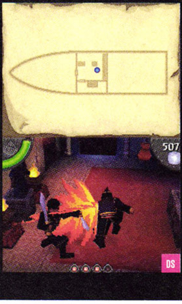
—CHRIS H.

Wii DS PUBLISHER: **THQ**
DEVELOPER: **THQ STUDIO AUSTRALIA (Wii), HALFBRICK (DS)**
RELEASE: **JUNE 2010**





[Above] Magic rings allow Aang to fly.

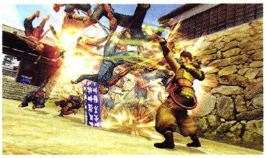


SENGOKU BASARA SAMURAI HEROES

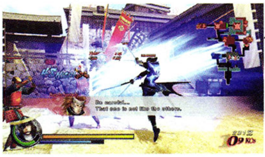
If only all history lessons were this action-packed....

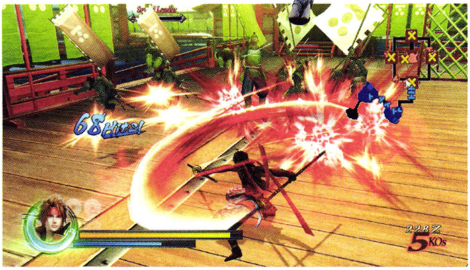
It would be easy to sum up Sengoku Basara Samurai Heroes as just a Dynasty Warriors clone, but Capcom's hack-'n'-slash title has a few key elements that set it apart from Koei's long-running series. For one, Samurai Heroes is set in 16th-century Japan (instead of ancient China), when the conflict between the east and west eventually led to the unification of the country. Additionally, this game is much more character-focused than Dynasty Warriors. There are more than 15 characters to choose from (many of which are based on actual historical figures), and they are all distinct and outlandish. The sword-swinging Mitsunori Ishida slices opponents with blink-and-you'll-miss-it speed, for instance, whereas his rival, Ieyasu Tokugawa, eschews slashing in favor of punching foes with his gauntlet-covered fists. The gameplay, too, is over-the-top: you're one person cutting swathes through waves of enemies, after all, and you've got abilities such as Hero Time (think the slow-motion bullet time from the *Matrix* flicks) and the powerful crowd-clearing Basara Arts at your disposal. —JUSTIN C.

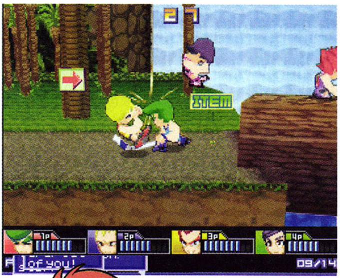
Wii **PUBLISHER: CAPCOM DEVELOPER: CAPCOM**
RELEASE DATE: FALL 2010

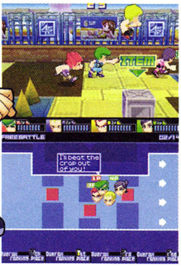


[Below] Masamune Date does his best Wolverine impression.








ITEM
FREEBATTLE
I'll beat the crap out of you!
1p
4p

RIVER CITY SUPER SPORTS CHALLENGE

Kunio hits the streets for another go-round.

Aksys Games is putting together a one-two punch to revive the fabled Kunio-Kun game series—a fount of classic action/sports titles back in the day (Super Dodge Ball, River City Ransom, Nintendo World Cup Soccer, etc.). We review the "one" of that combo, River City Soccer Hooligans, in this issue. Next up, an every-man-for-himself affair that purifies the franchise by ditching the beautiful game; this is about beating folks up, remember?

Super Sports Challenge pits Kunio and his hot-blooded compadres against the Tobioka Conglomerate in a tournament of minigames. Cross Country and Obstacle Room events are all about racin' and fightin', Treasure Scramble is all about collectin' and fightin', and Tournament Fight is all about...fightin'. In addition to tournament play, Challenge and Free Battle modes provide alternate paths through the same events. A character/team-building feature and Download Play round things out.

Preview play proves a mixed bag; while the brawling engine brings much love to Kunio-Kun fans (dashing kicks and tire throwing: check!), some of the game mechanics give cause for concern. (Racing events, for example, reset the runners' positions each time you enter a new course segment.) Fingers crossed for a polished final release! —PATRICK C.

DS **PUBLISHER: AKSYS GAMES DEVELOPER: ARC SYSTEM WORKS**
RELEASE: JULY 2010

FLIP'S TWISTED WORLD

Turn it up...and down...and sideways!

FLIP WASN'T TRYING to get into trouble. He just wanted to follow in the footsteps of his adoptive father and become a wizard. So who can blame him for sneaking into the forbidden room (the one clearly labeled Keep Out) and taking a look at the magic book called *The World*? How was he to know that he'd get sucked inside without an easy way to return?

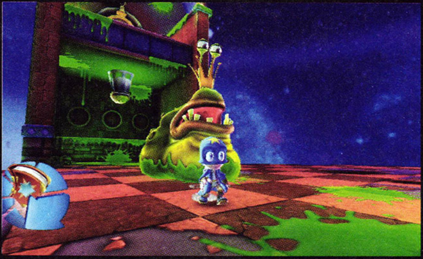
Luckily, Flip brought along his magic cube—a talking wizard-training device with multiple-personality disorder. When Flip steps on glowing Power Tiles he earns new abilities for the cube; the first one he acquires is the rotation power. By holding the B Button and turning the Wii Remote controller (or holding a direction on the Control Stick), you can rotate the entire game environment, thus enabling you to walk on walls and ceilings. Twisting the world is integral to the entire adventure, and it allows for some extremely creative level design that adds a significant puzzle element to the platforming.

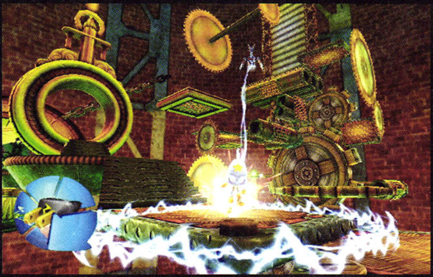
The early areas are pretty straightforward. In the first world, The Void, you'll walk along palm tree-filled paths, collecting coins, smacking enemies, destroying monster generators, conversing with helpful characters, pushing blocks onto switches, and occasionally rotating the environment as necessary. At the end is the self-proclaimed Slug King, who you defeat with the aid of a giant salt shaker.

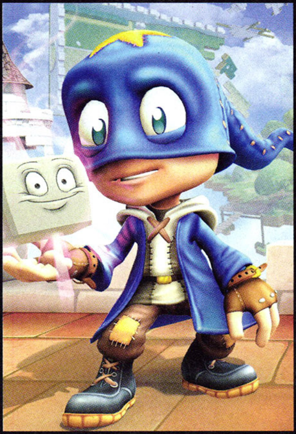
As you acquire Chapter Stones (the keys to escaping *The World*), you'll be able to access other locales, including a medieval castle keep, a lush jungle, a frozen glacier, and a clockwork tower. You'll also earn new cube abilities, such as the use of a spiked flail (that can smash through rubble and defeat otherwise-unbeatable bad guys) and elemental powers of flame, electricity, water, and ice. Despite the game's cute (and extremely visually impressive) exterior, the levels soon become quite challenging and complex—it's not long before you're exploring convoluted stages that look like they came out of an MC Escher painting.

Flip's Twisted World still has some rough edges, but Majesco appears to be giving the developers the time they need to make a finely tuned platformer; the game was recently delayed from June until September. Assuming the emphasis on quality continues, this one could be something special when it finally hits store shelves. —**CHRIS H.**

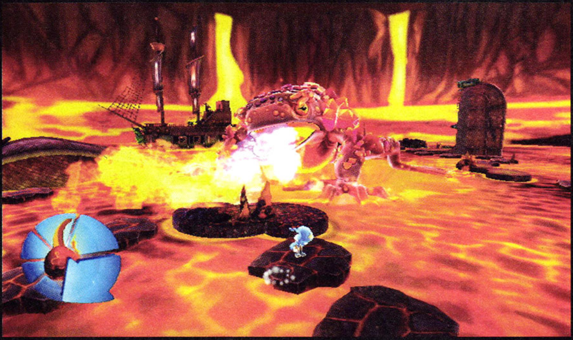
Wii
PUBLISHER: **MAJESCO**
DEVELOPER: **FROZEN NORTH**
RELEASE: **SEPTEMBER 2010**







[Left] Flip looks like a hobo more than a hero, but he's got all the right moves.



NINTENDO POWER PRESENTS

The OFFICIAL GUIDE TO MARIO!

If you love Mario as much as we do, then you can't miss this special tribute to the mustachioed man of action. It's packed with fun facts about everyone's favorite high-flying hero, detailed looks at the games that made him famous, his coolest cameos, and lots more. Plus, we've even included 10 pull-out posters of classic Mario artwork and a custom sheet of 29 Mario stickers! Pick up your copy before Bowser torches 'em all!

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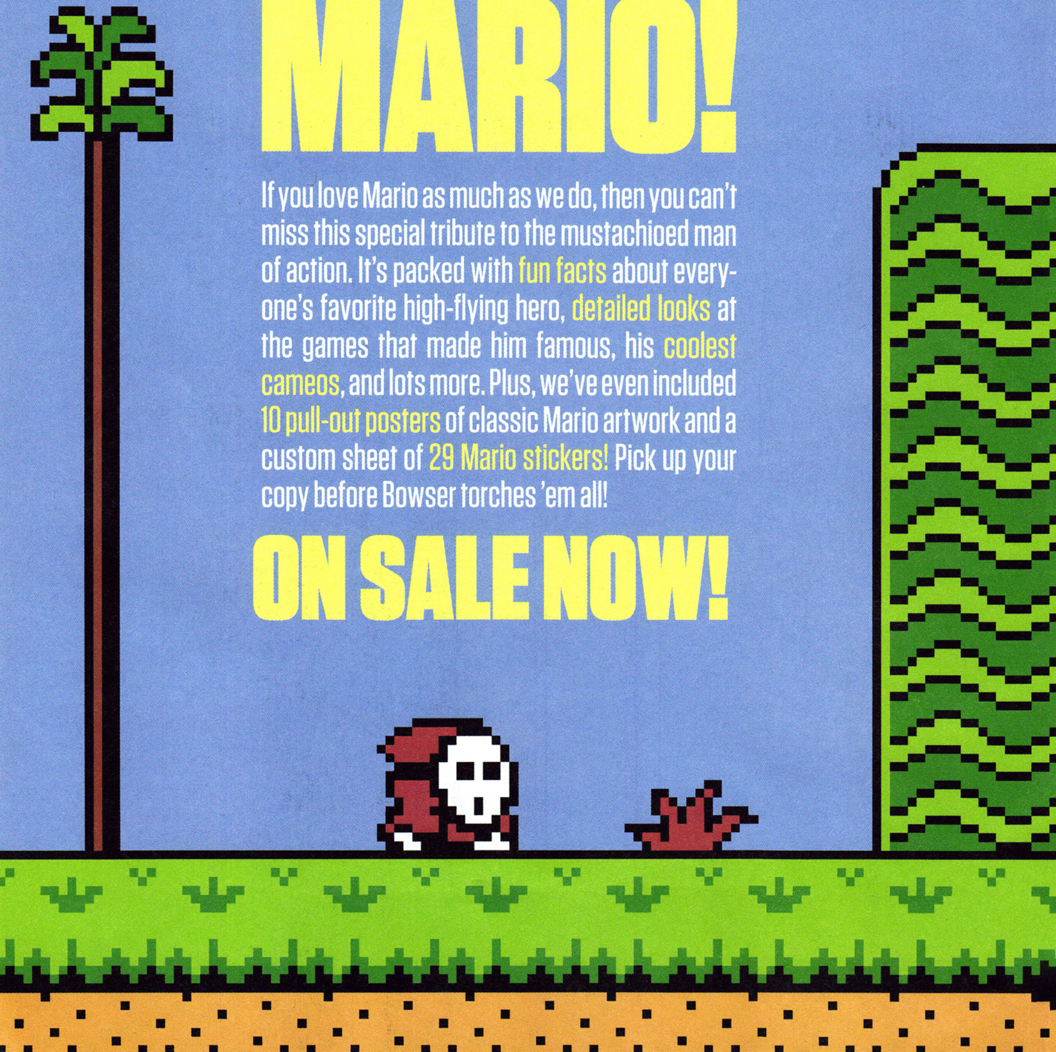

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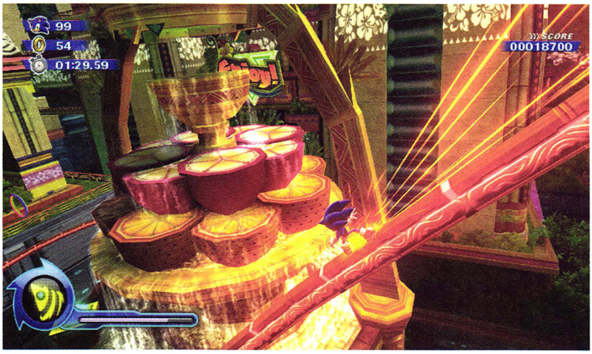
BY **STEVE THOMASON**

PUBLISHER: **SEGA** DEVELOPER: **SONIC TEAM** RELEASE: **FALL 2010**

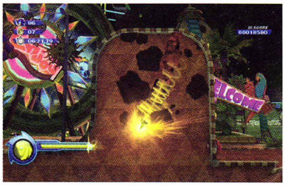
Wii DS

One of gaming's biggest icons looks to get back on track with **Sonic Colors.** No gimmick necessary.

FRESH CANVAS

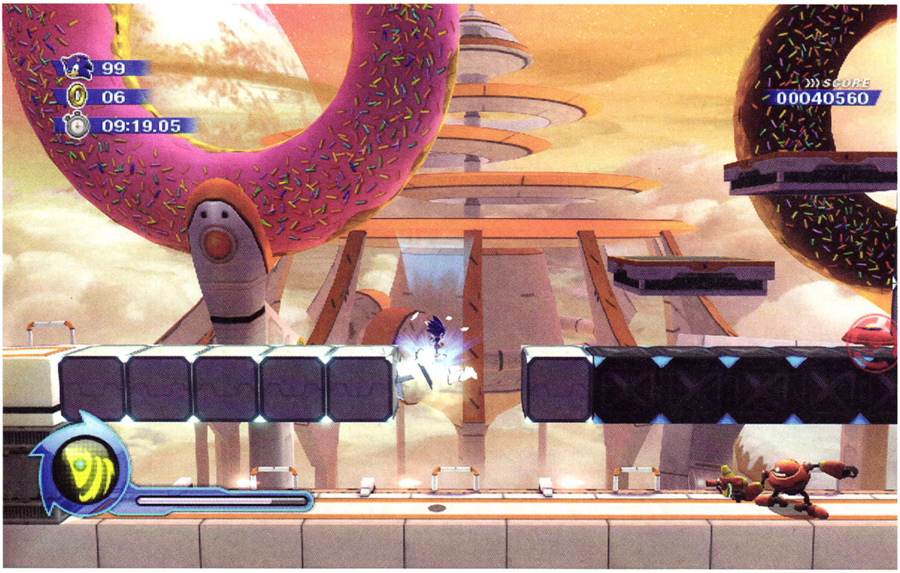


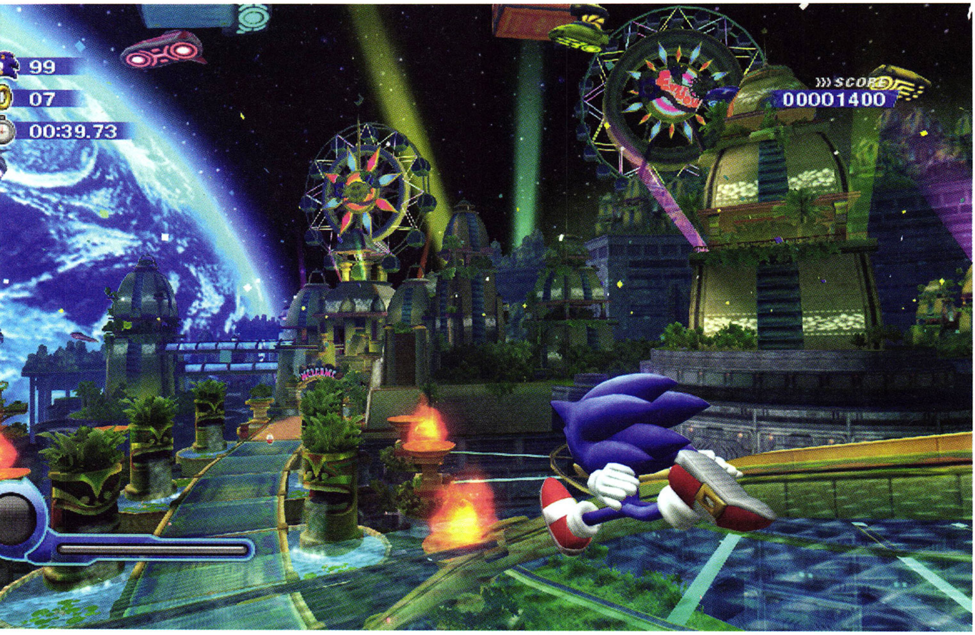
Sonic may very well be the most provocative figure in video games. That may seem a strange thing to claim about an anthropomorphic hedgehog, but no other character seems to evoke a more spirited response among the gaming community and on Internet message boards (just Google "The Sonic Cycle"). After rising to prominence in the early '90s and starring in some of that decade's greatest hits, Sega's fleet-footed mascot has had a tough go of it the past 10 years. Not all of his recent works are without merit, but for every solid outing like Sonic Advance, there's a soaring disappointment like 2006's Sonic the Hedgehog for Xbox 360. As a result, the Blue Blur's reputation has taken a beating, and each new game announcement is met with a heavy dose of skepticism from his longtime fans.



[Right] Someone at Sonic Team must be a fan of the Game Boy Advance cult classic Drill Dozer.

That leads us to our world-exclusive unveiling of Sonic Colors. I've covered this franchise in the pages of Nintendo Power for many years, and though I've perhaps been more forgiving of its missteps than most, I can honestly say that I haven't been this excited about a Sonic title since Sonic Adventure on Dreamcast. I'm not going to call Sonic Colors a return to the hedgehog's roots, however. That's a lazy and overused phrase when it comes to this series, and I'm as guilty as anyone of leaning on it. Plus, going back to basics shouldn't have to be a prerequisite to making a fun Sonic game. The developers just need to make better design choices than, say, arming our hero with a sword or transforming him into a werehog. And that's where Sonic Colors shows tremendous promise.





Playing with Power-Ups

Rather than saddle its prickly speedster with some overbearing gimmick, Sonic's latest romp takes a less radical approach to spicing things up. It calls upon a tried-and-true video game concept that's served fellow platforming icon Mario for years: the power-up. Scattered throughout each stage are otherwordly Wisps that come in various colors (hence the game's title) and temporarily bestow our hedgehog with unique abilities. Yellow Wisps, for example, turn Sonic into a drill, allowing him to burrow underground or to zip through water like a torpedo. Green Wisps, on the other hand, convert Sonic into pure energy and let him shoot across the screen like a laser, annihilating any foes in his path. According to Sega, we should expect seven or eight different Wisps in all. You can carry only one at a time, and to activate its power, you simply flick the Wii Remote controller. A gauge at the bottom of the screen shows how long you have until the ability wears off—about 10 seconds in the case of the yellow Wisp (though you can refill the gauge by snagging another Wisp while you're drilling).

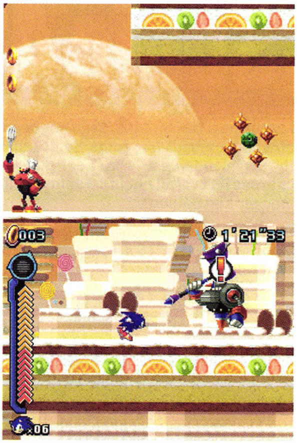
And that's the new gameplay hook in Sonic Colors. It's like sprinkling a little bit of seasoning on your dish instead of drenching it with some pungent sauce until you can't even recognize the original flavor. That welcome show of restraint pervades other aspects of the game, as well. Sonic

POCKET COLORS

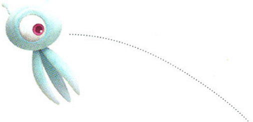
Sonic Colors is also coming to the Nintendo DS handheld, courtesy of Dimps, the same studio responsible for Sonic Rush and Sonic Rush Adventure. Like those games, it's a 2-D side-scroller in which the action extends across both screens. The overall look and feel is very similar to that of the Rush titles, but as with the Wii version of Sonic Colors, you can snag Wisps to temporarily bestow the Blue Blur with special abilities.

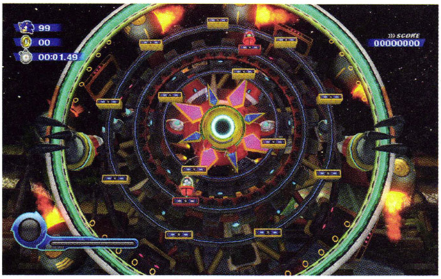
Though the Wii and DS games include many of the same Wisps, two are unique to the handheld iteration. One of those is a red Wisp that turns Sonic into a fireball, during which time he can boost through the air repeatedly in any direction. The power-up enables him to reach high altitudes and essentially hover across wide gaps. Each Wisp also activates certain mechanisms; in this case, you can ignite a rocket platform, for instance, which blasts Sonic across a large chunk of the stage.

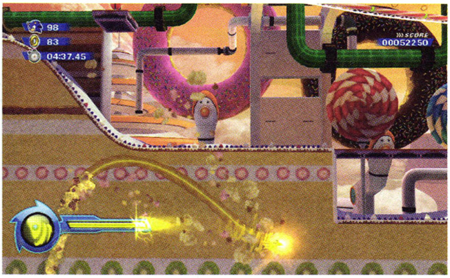
Boss battles will be unique to each version of the game, though in a nice little touch, you'll spot bosses from the Wii title

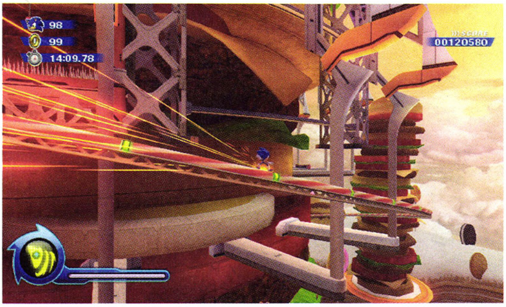


Sweet Mountain looks every bit as delicious on DS.

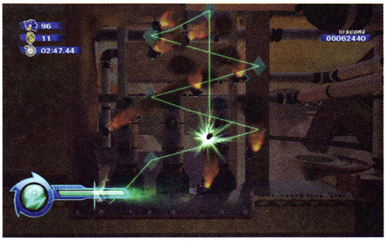








[Left] Now *that's* what we call a burger. Your move, McDonald's.



is the only playable character. Motion controls are limited to the aforementioned Wisp activation and tilting the Nunchuk controller to drift around hairpin turns. And what we've seen of the narrative is minimalistic, lighthearted, and appropriately goofy. More on that later, but rest assured that we won't be subjected to any uncomfortable romances this time around.

The action switches back and forth between a 3-D behind-the-hedgehog perspective and a 2.5-D side-scrolling view, with the latter accounting for about 70% of what we played. The 3-D sections usually take place on a fairly narrow path and encourage you to keep moving forward at high speeds, whereas the side-scrolling portions tend to slow things down with quite a bit of platforming. That mix definitely lends the game a better sense of pacing than in recent Sonic titles. What's more, there are tons of hidden paths accessible only with certain power-ups, offering plentiful opportunities for exploration. Just the amount of underground real estate you can survey with the drill is enormous and littered with nooks containing rings, 1-Ups, and mysterious emblems (the purpose of which Sega wouldn't reveal). Reaching some of those subterranean goodies requires a few extra moments to bore through chunks of rock, but you have to keep a close eye on the time gauge; if the power-up expires while Sonic is still underground, you'll have dug his grave. During our demo, we also discovered the occasional antenna, which serves as a conduit for the laser power-up, teleporting Sonic instantly to another part of the level. Those are the only two Wisps we got to try for ourselves, though Sega also described a rocket power-up that fires Sonic "into the stratosphere."

What's Up with Sonic 4?

For the past few months, Sega has been pretty quiet with regard to its other upcoming Sonic game, Sonic the Hedgehog 4. It turns out that the downloadable title has been quietly delayed until later this year to improve its overall quality. For an update, we spoke with Sega brand manger Ken Balough.

NINTENDO POWER **What prompted the delay?**

KEN BALOUGH A desire to be better. Sega has received a terrific response from the community regarding Sonic 4, and we want to ensure that we're delivering an excellent Sonic 4 experience. To that end, we are extending the development and improving on an already terrific product. In addition, we will be incorporating feedback we have received from the community itself, making this game truly for the fans!

Which elements are the team looking to change or improve? Is this a significant overhaul or is it more a matter of tweaks and polish?

Well the game isn't complete yet, but what the extended development will allow us to do is more than just tweaks and polish. Sega will be improving physics, balancing, and even level design itself.

Will this affect the episodic plans for the game or Sega's approach to future episodes?

Not at all. The story and number of episodes for Sonic 4 have been established. What this does allow Sega to do, though, is address relevant feedback that we have received both internally and externally. Sonic 4 is targeted at all of us out there that grew up with the Genesis-era Sonic and we have an internal team that is very passionate about this title and has a lot of pride in the product.

The Wonderful Worlds of Robotnik

Following in the footsteps of Super Mario Galaxy, Sonic Colors spans a number of planets. The Blue Blur's arch nemesis, Dr. Robotnik, has pulled these worlds together using a ginormous tractor beam and turned them into a sprawling, interplanetary amusement park. We suspect his interest in the planets has something to do with their native Wisps. Where the amusement park figures into Robotnik's plan we're not entirely sure, but Sonic definitely seems more at home in this sort of crazy atmosphere than he has in the relatively realistic settings of his last few games. You'll travel from planet to planet via a world-select map, and at certain points in the game, you'll have limited freedom to choose which destination to tackle next. Our brief glimpse at the map revealed eight planets, including one shaped like the head of a certain metallic foe. Whether that's the full complement of the worlds on offer or whether the map eventually expands to reveal more, Sega wouldn't say.

The level designs themselves are very fantastical, as well, harking back to the likes of the Casino Night Zone in Sonic the Hedgehog 2. Our demo kicked off with a stage called the Tropical Resort Zone, which looks like a futuristic Las Vegas in outer space. Gaudy neon signs and elaborate water fountains welcome you to the park while multicolored spotlights illuminate the night, calling your attention to the hover cars overhead. Giant Ferris wheels dominate the skyline, and beyond them looms the majestic horizon of a nearby planet. Our favorite touch, though: hearing Robotnik's voice over the PA system, informing visitors that there's a vehicle in the parking lot with its lights on. Perhaps the megalomaniacal scientist has found a new calling after all!

Or judging by the Ferris wheel that transforms into a murderous robot at the end of the stage, maybe not. Your battle with the game's first boss takes place in the 2.5-D perspective and finds Sonic encircled in a massive ring. As the killer carnival ride tries to flatten our hero with its hands, you have to reach the weak point on its head either by gaining enough speed to run up the ring or by catching a ride on the boss's spinning passenger cars. Simply jumping on said weak point will get the job done eventually, but you'll expedite the process if you can snag the green Wisp atop one of the cars and get a clear shot at your adversary's head with the laser. According to Sega, the power-ups can come into play in a similar manner against all of the game's bosses.

The Sweet Mountain Zone takes things even further into the bizarre-o-sphere, surrounding Sonic with donuts, pancakes, and other assorted foodstuffs the size of mountains. Rather than use the drill power-up to tunnel through soil, he burrows through giant layer cakes with it. Rockets filled with jelly beans attempt to bring our hero's journey to a bittersweet end, but he can use the sugary instruments of destruction to his advantage by flipping a switch that draws enemies into the line of fire. Such zone-specific gimmicks are sprinkled throughout each stage, as are familiar platforming obstacles such as air vents that make Sonic float uncontrollably. In another nod to the classic Genesis games, every level concludes with the hedgehog stepping on a button to free dozens of Wisps from a metal capsule.

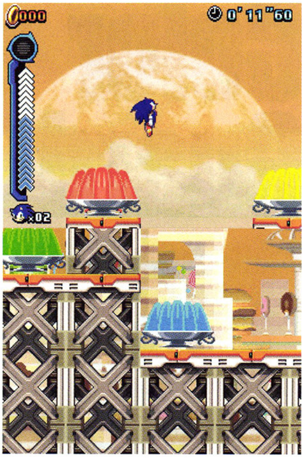
Visually, Sonic Colors pushes the Wii hardware like few other titles. The environments feel incredibly expansive and there's always a lot going on in the background, bringing the worlds to life. Better still, we didn't notice a single frame-rate hiccup during our play test. The soundtrack is an upbeat, jazzy concoction, eschewing the franchise's tired electric-guitar sound in favor of a robust horn section.

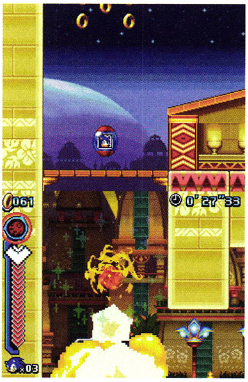
It's been a long, strange journey for our favorite hedgehog these past few years, but if Sonic Team continues in this direction, we're optimistic that they can return the Blue Blur to greatness. At the very least, there's no sign of that morbidly obese cat.

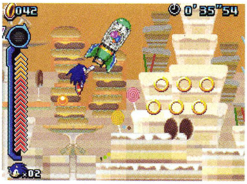
POCKET COLORS

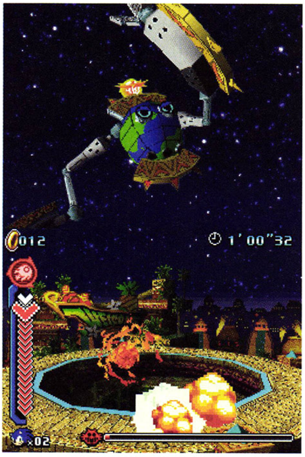
in the background of the DS installment and vice versa. Reinforcing its Sonic Rush pedigree, the handheld game switches to a 3-D playfield for its boss encounters. Our brief demo concluded with a battle against a giant robot shaped like a globe. After you hit the rotund machine a couple of times, it flies to the top screen and beyond your reach unless you grab a red Wisp. Doing so allows you to follow your foe and continue the assault rather than simply dodging his missiles while you wait for him to return to Earth.

The Rush titles are a source of some debate among Sonic's most orthodox fans, but we've enjoyed them quite a bit and have high hopes for this spiritual successor.



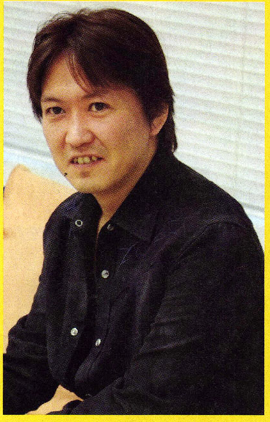






[Above] It's time for Sonic to introduce this boss to a little global warming. [Left] The Blue Blur catches a ride on a jellybean rocket. Willy Wonka, eat your heart out.

Color Guard



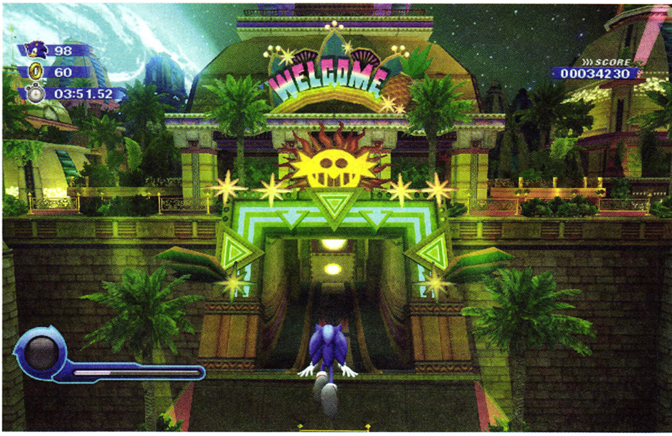
For the past few years, almost every new Sonic title has had a different producer, which was likely a factor in the brand's recent identity crisis. Hoping to remedy that and bring the franchise under a singular vision, Takashi Iizuka—a Sonic Team veteran who served as senior game designer on both Sonic the Hedgehog 3 and Sonic & Knuckles—has taken the reins of all things hedgehog, starting with Sonic Colors and Sonic the Hedgehog 4. We sat down with the Blue Blur's new guardian to discuss not only Sonic Colors, but also his views on the series as a whole.

NINTENDO POWER **Can you tell us a little bit about the origins of the story for Sonic Colors and why it takes place on these different planets in outer space?**

TAKASHI IIZUKA Sonic Colors is set in a massive outer-space amusement park constructed by Dr. Robotnik. The original plan simply called for a large amusement park, but we began to feel that any sort of terrestrial amusement park would be too small to contain Sonic's adventures. That led to the idea of making a park that spanned entire planets.

Many recent Sonic titles have been set in a world that feels somewhat realistic. Sonic Colors, though, obviously returns to level designs that are more fantastical. Was that something you felt was important?

Absolutely. Even before development on Sonic Colors began, we were adamant that the next Sonic game should have a fun and fantastical flavor. Recent advances in game hardware have made photorealistic graphics possible, but we wanted to take that same technology and try using it to create a more imaginative visual style and a richer game experience. Making something exciting and new and fun—that's what Sonic is all about, and we really wanted to focus on that with Sonic Colors.



During our demo, we got to see the Tropical Resort and Sweet Mountain zones. Can you give us any hints as to what other types of worlds we'll see in the game?

Tropical Resort and Sweet Mountain are each small pieces of a giant amusement park. Tropical Resort is the sort of tourist-hotel area built around the park's entrance, while Sweet Mountain is a slightly offbeat attraction inspired by a candy factory. All of the stages are like that: fun areas built around the theme of classic amusement-park attractions.

Who is directing Sonic Colors? And what other games has this particular development team worked on recently?

The director of the Wii version is Morio Kishimoto, who was the lead game designer for both Sonic and the Secret Rings and Sonic and the Black Knight. The director of the DS version is Takao Hirabayashi, who was the lead planner of Sonic Unleashed. Their teams are primarily comprised of the planners, designers, and programmers who worked on Sonic Unleashed and Sonic and the Black Knight.

What was the inspiration for the Wisps and power-ups in the game?

When you say "Sonic," the first image that pops into most people's heads is that of Sonic running. And until now, we haven't really been able to successfully implement any moves besides running. We wanted to explore ways of adding new moves and new styles of play without sacrificing the traditional Sonic running action, and that led to the creation of the transformation power-up system.

Which is your favorite power-up in the game, and why?

The laser and drill power-ups that we showed off earlier are definitely among my favorites. I had been worried that the move where Sonic burrows into the ground with the drill power-up would be too difficult to implement, but the staff put a lot of energy into it and really pulled it off. It's a lot of fun to do, and the tempo is just perfect. However, there are other power-ups in the game that are even more bizarre and fun to use, but we're not allowed to show them off yet. Please look forward to it!

The last few Sonic games have featured a prominent gimmick—Sonic Unleashed had the werehog, for example, while Sonic and the Black Knight saw our hero wielding a sword.

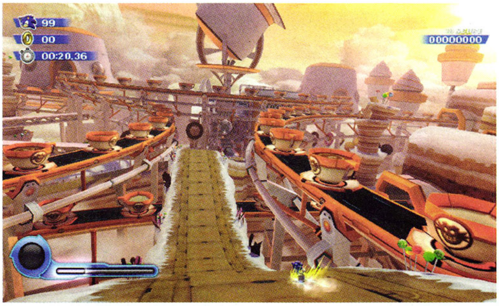
Though the Wisps definitely introduce a new element to Sonic Colors, they don't seem to dominate the experience as radically as those other examples. Was that something you and the team had in mind when coming up with the Wisp concept?
In all of our past Sonic games, we tried to experiment with introducing new styles of gameplay that didn't involve running, but I think that those elements were so different that they ended up clashing with the traditional Sonic gameplay instead of complementing it. When it came time to work out the power-ups for Sonic Colors, I feel we really succeeded in embracing our core concept of "100%-pure Sonic-style high-speed action," and coming up with new moves that gelled well with Sonic's core gameplay.

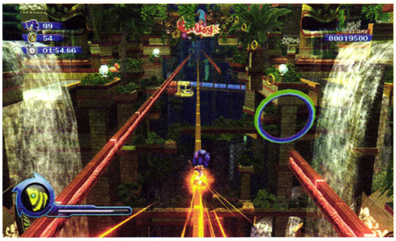
Who's composing the music for the game, and what has been the overall approach to the soundtrack?
The music is being handled by the same Sega sound team that has worked on most of the past Sonic titles. Since this game has an amusement-park setting and a more fantastical visual style, they're trying to expand beyond the usual "cool" Sonic sound and focus on making fun, up-tempo music that will really get players' blood pumping.

Are there plans for any multiplayer modes, either co-op or competitive?
Unfortunately, it is too early to talk about this, but keep on the lookout for more information in the future.

Will any other characters from the series make an appearance besides Sonic and Dr. Robotnik?
Tails does appear in the story, but the only playable character is Sonic himself. The cast also includes Dr. Robotnik and a few of his robot henchmen, as well as the Wisps. In the DS version, which has a different story from the Wii version, we hope to have more familiar characters like Shadow and Knuckles show up in the amusement park.

> **"I think the recent titles in the series have failed to play to Sonic's strengths."**





[Left] Dr. Robotnik's amusement park looks like it would be a lot of fun if it weren't for all the death traps and homicidal robots.

The game switches back and forth between a 3-D and a 2-D perspective. Why did you decide to go with that approach rather than stick to one perspective? And how do you go about finding the proper balance between the two?
The 2-D and 3-D perspectives each emphasize a different strength of the Sonic experience. The 3-D perspective provides a more thrilling sense of speed, while the side-scrolling 2-D segments allow for deeper platforming-style action. By smoothly transitioning between them we can present a better balance of speed and action.

Some longtime fans feel that Sonic has lost his way in recent years. Do you agree with that sentiment, and if so, what do you think needs to happen to get him back on the right path?
I would have to agree with that. By adding game elements that didn't fit with Sonic's traditional theme of speed, I think the recent titles in the series have failed to play to Sonic's strengths. That's why this year's Sonic games—Sonic the Hedgehog 4: Episode 1 and Sonic Colors—have been developed with a central focus on reestablishing the traditional Sonic gameplay experience. Sonic Colors introduces a style of power-up-driven action that is entirely new to the series, but I think it still maintains the sense of speed and satisfying pacing that are the hallmarks of the series.

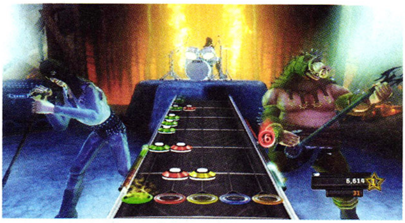
If we're not mistaken, it's been a few years since you were so directly involved in a Sonic title. How does it feel to be reunited with the hedgehog for both this title and Sonic 4, and where do you want to take the franchise moving forward?
I worked on last year's Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Winter Games, but it has indeed been a long time since I've been directly involved with a Sonic action game. There have been a lot of titles released in that time, including next-gen Sonic the Hedgehog and Sonic Unleashed. Personally, I feel that we need to look beyond each individual title and take a wider view, with more of a focus on the overall Sonic franchise. I'd like to see the franchise evolve with more of a focus on the elements that make Sonic special, as well as the fundamental joys of the action genre, in order to make games that can be enjoyed by everyone from children to serious gamers. I think the next pair of titles, Sonic 4 and Sonic Colors, will be a good demonstration of that.

Thank you so much for your time! Is there anything else you'd like our readers to know about Sonic Colors?
The power-ups in Sonic Colors are lot of fun and personally, I'm thrilled with the way they've turned out. There are a lot of really interesting ones we aren't able to reveal yet, so please keep an eye out for those. In addition to the power-ups, we're working on several new features that I think are really going to surprise you!

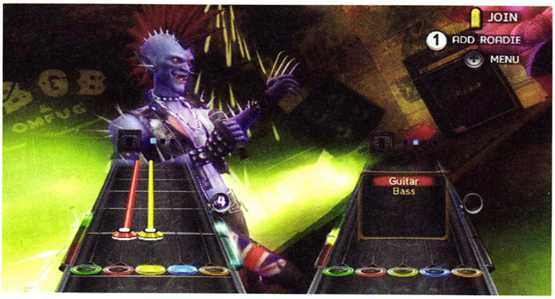
HERO'S QUEST

Guitar Hero: Warriors of Rock breathes new life into the long-running rhythm-game series with its story, challenges, and guitar-heavy rock 'n' roll.

Apparently, you *can* have too much of a good thing. In addition to the yearly iteration of Guitar Hero, 2009 also saw the introduction of Band Hero and DJ Hero (not to mention the Rock Band spinoffs The Beatles: Rock Band and LEGO Rock Band). Things clearly got out of hand. Responding to the resulting decline in sales, Activision pledged to scale back on the sheer number of music games the publisher releases each year—which is definitely a welcome change, confesses Brian Bright, the project lead on the upcoming Guitar Hero: Warriors of Rock at developer Neversoft: "We're only making this game this year. So it's been really good for us to focus on this title and really put our all into it. And one of the things we really wanted to do was capture some of that soul that personally I thought the first three games had." (Vicarious Visions is developing the Wii game based on Neversoft's PlayStation 3 and Xbox 360 versions.)

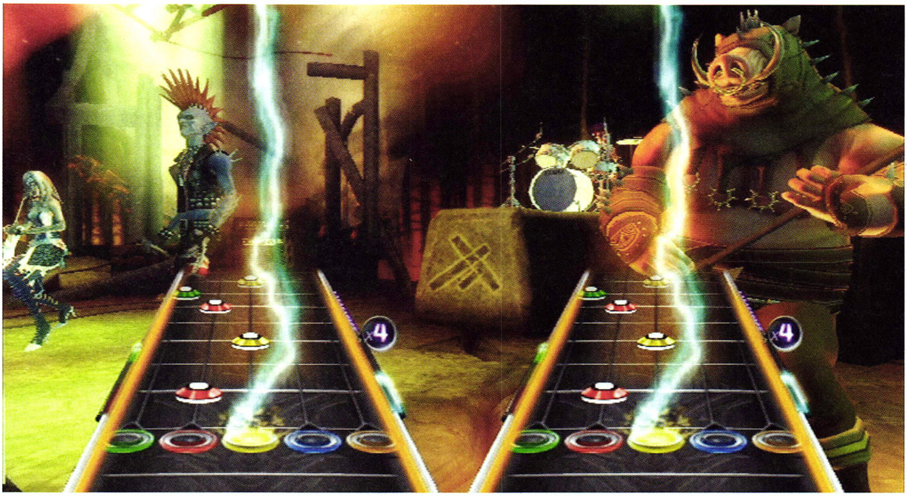


The first step in bringing back that soul to a rhythm game like Guitar Hero is, naturally, the music. The soundtrack is a huge part of the experience, after all, and very little had to be changed gameplaywise, as much of the solid Guitar Hero framework was already in place from Guitar Hero 5. "All of the cool features and things we did in GH5—the level of polish—[are] still there," Bright explains. "Party Play still exists. The ability to play with any instrument combination—all that stuff is still in the game. But what we strove to do here is hand-pick all the songs." And they selected tracks with a particular genre of



BY **JUSTIN CHENG**

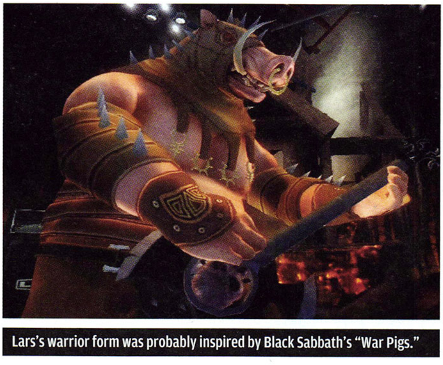
PUBLISHER: **ACTIVISION** DEVELOPER: **VICARIOUS VISIONS** RELEASE: **FALL 2010** **Wii**



music in mind: rock ’n’ roll. More specifically, guitar-centric rock ’n’ roll because “so many more people play Guitar Hero on guitar than any other instrument,” Bright notes. “We wanted to focus first and foremost on shredding kind of rock.”

ROCK SAGA

Neversoft respotlighting rock ’n’ roll after venturing into non-rock territory with Guitar Hero 5 (which included the likes of Elton John and Stevie Wonder—both good but definitely not shredding) lends Warriors of Rock a certain visual flair that is inspired by “heavy-metal album art from the late ’70s, early ’80s,” Bright tells us. He elaborates, “You’ve seen the albums with rivers of chrome and guys on horses with bat wings and stuff—kind of drawing inspiration from that over-the-top rock-’n’-roll fantasy.” More than just the aesthetics, though, Neversoft went whole hog with the heavy-metal feel, crafting a unique storyline that fits the style perfectly. This otherworldly tale, narrated by KISS front man Gene Simmons in a brand-new Quest mode, begins with an “epic opening movie [about the battle between] the Beast and the demigod of rock,” Bright tells us. “The Beast defeats the demigod of rock, and the demigod of rock is entombed in stone, and his legendary guitar is banished. [The guitar] is the source of his power. And so you are going through and assembling an army of warriors to be able to defeat the beast. Along the way, you’ll have to recover the legendary guitar, but in the end you’re defeating the Beast and you’re basically assembling this



Lars’s warrior form was probably inspired by Black Sabbath’s “War Pigs.”

RETURN OF THE ROADIES

Vicarious Visions is adding its own touch to the Wii version of Warriors of Rock: three Roadie modes that use the Nintendo DS handheld in some fashion. In Roadie Set List Manager, for example, a friend can create a custom set list on his DS. More exciting, however, are the Roadie Quickplay+ and Roadie Battle modes, in which allies play minigames on their dual-screened handhelds to unleash what David Rodriguez, lead designer at Vicarious Visions, calls “spells.” Roadie Quickplay+ is a cooperative experience, so “all of the spell effects are positive and give boosts to Wii players as they attempt to complete challenges, such as extra score multipliers or note-streak savers,” Rodriguez explains. The competitive Roadie Battle mode also features ally-assisting spells, but foe-foiling “curses,” too. “The curses are flashy effects that appear on the Wii highway, including setting the highway on fire or accelerating their highway to an insane speed, which make life difficult for the Wii player,” Rodriguez tells us. “The roadie has to balance their game between attacking and boosting while still being available to repair any of these damaging effects that they may receive.” Granted, Roadie Battle appeared in Guitar Hero 5 for Wii, but Vicarious Visions is stepping things up. As many as eight people can play at once now (four rockers on the Wii console and four roadies, each with his own Nintendo DS), and roadies can assist drum and bass players as well as guitarists (Roadie Battle was a guitar-only experience previously).

army of warriors."

Some if not all of the warriors should be familiar to those who have played previous Guitar Hero titles; two of the characters we saw (out of a total of eight shredders) included metal-head Lars Ümlaüt and punk-rocker Johnny Napalm. Assuming the roles of these characters (since you cannot create your own rocker in Quest mode), you jam your way to your final confrontation with the Beast. Fortunately, each character brings unique powers to the table. Lars can get a 5x multiplier (the most you can get with everyone else is 4x), for example, whereas Johnny's multiplier never goes lower than 2x and he can acquire only up to two bonus stars (everyone else can gain up to five stars, with a bonus sixth star for an absolutely perfect performance). These powers can be upgraded, too, when each character's warrior form is unlocked. Right before Lars's encore performance in which he plays Black Sabbath's "Children of the Grave," he transforms into a fearsome pig-man, and he can get a 6x multiplier. Prior to playing "What Do I Get?" by Buzzcocks, Johnny morphs into a teleporting creature that's reminiscent of Nightcrawler from the X-Men. Warrior Johnny's multiplier is never lower than 3x, and he can accrue up to five extra stars. (By the way, there's a reason the characters play those specific songs: "Each character has a genre of music that's a little more associated with that character's personality," explains Bright. "And we've tried to group together all the songs that fit that character.")

STAR SEARCH

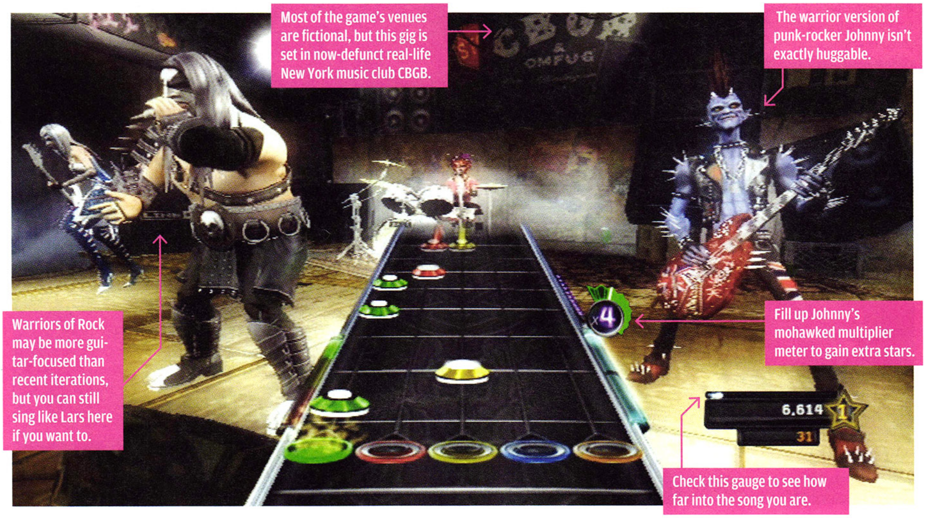
Once unlocked, the warrior versions and their respective powers carry over to Quickplay+, a mode that presents the more-traditional Guitar Hero experience. Here you can create your own rock star and choose which of the 90-plus songs you want to play, as you would in, say, Guitar Hero 5. The "+" in the mode name comes from the challenges associated with each song. There are Power Challenges, for example, in

THE TRACKS

Guitar Hero 6 will feature more than 90 songs. Here's a small sample of what you can expect.

"Dancing through Sunday" BY AFI
"Children of the Grave" BY BLACK SABBATH
"What Do I Get?" BY BUZZCOCKS
"If You Want Peace...Prepare for War" BY CHILDREN OF BODOM
"Fascination Street" by The Cure
"Pour Some Sugar on Me (Live)" BY DEF LEPPARD
"Bloodlines" BY DETHKLOK
"Fury of the Storm" BY DRAGONFORCE
"Been Caught Stealing" BY JANE'S ADDICTION
"Love Gun" BY KISS
"Sudden Death" BY MEGADETH
"Paranoid (Live)" BY METALLICA & OZZY OSBOURNE
"Uprising" BY MUSE
"I'm Not Okay (I Promise)" BY MY CHEMICAL ROMANCE
"Bohemian Rhapsody" BY QUEEN
"Waidmanns Heil" BY RAMMSTEIN
"There's No Secrets This Year" BY SILVERSUN PICKUPS
"Chemical Warfare" BY SLAYER
"Sharp Dressed Man (Live)" BY ZZ TOP

Even before his transformation, Lars looks like he's ready for Halloween.

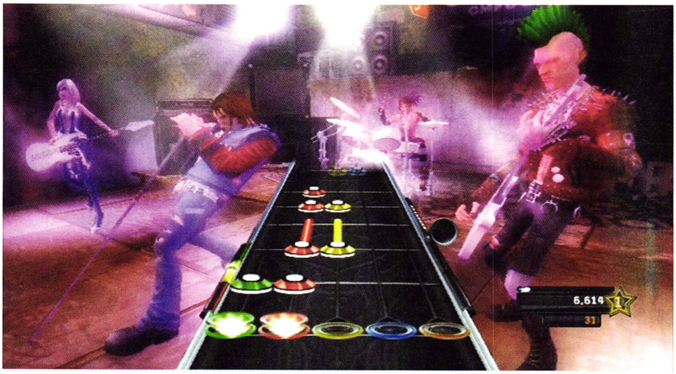

Most of the game's venues are fictional, but this gig is set in now-defunct real-life New York music club CBGB.

The warrior version of punk-rocker Johnny isn't exactly huggable.

Warriors of Rock may be more guitar-focused than recent iterations, but you can still sing like Lars here if you want to.

Fill up Johnny's mohawked multiplier meter to gain extra stars.

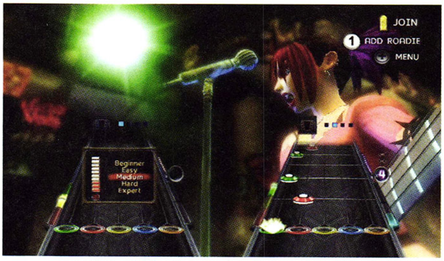
Check this gauge to see how far into the song you are.

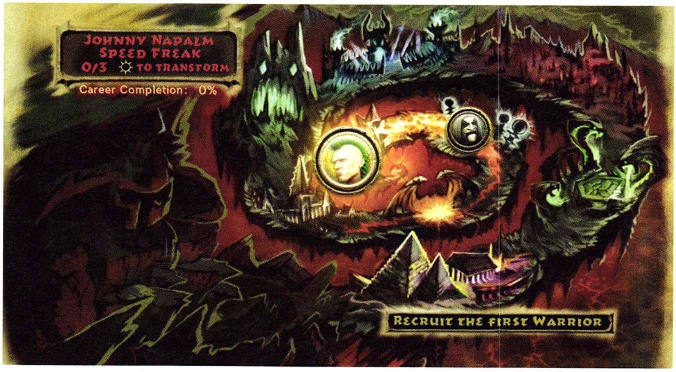


which you use your unlocked powers to gain stars. Then there are the 11 or 12 other challenges you can complete to obtain more stars (up to 42 stars per song). "As you earn stars, you earn ranks," Bright says. "As you go up in ranks, not only does your little moniker icon change on the leaderboards, similar to the Call of Duties out there...but you also have an unlockable at all the rank updates. It could be characters, it could be create-a-rocker parts, it could be instruments...even songs." Thankfully, the challenges stack, so you can complete several challenges in one playthrough. For instance, you might beat a high score while also hitting a certain number of notes. (You cannot use your powers on these challenges, though, as that would make things too easy.)

It's not just the songs specific to this Guitar Hero that have these challenges, either; every song—be it downloadable content or tracks from Guitar Hero 5 and Band Hero—will have challenges, giving you even more opportunities to collect stars. Speaking of downloadable content, Bright says the game is "tightly integrated with our Music Store now, so you can select any song in your set list and go download similar songs. We also keep track of your play count, so after you've played for a while, we can give you recommendations based on the types [and] the genres."

With its enhanced play mechanics, emphasis on story, and vast array of challenges, Guitar Hero: Warriors of Rock seems to offer a *lot* of bang for your buck. Whether that's enough to re-energize the burned-out-on-rhythm-games masses remains to be seen; we'll find out for sure this fall.

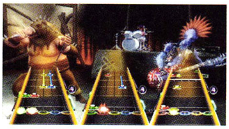




ROCK-STAR POWER

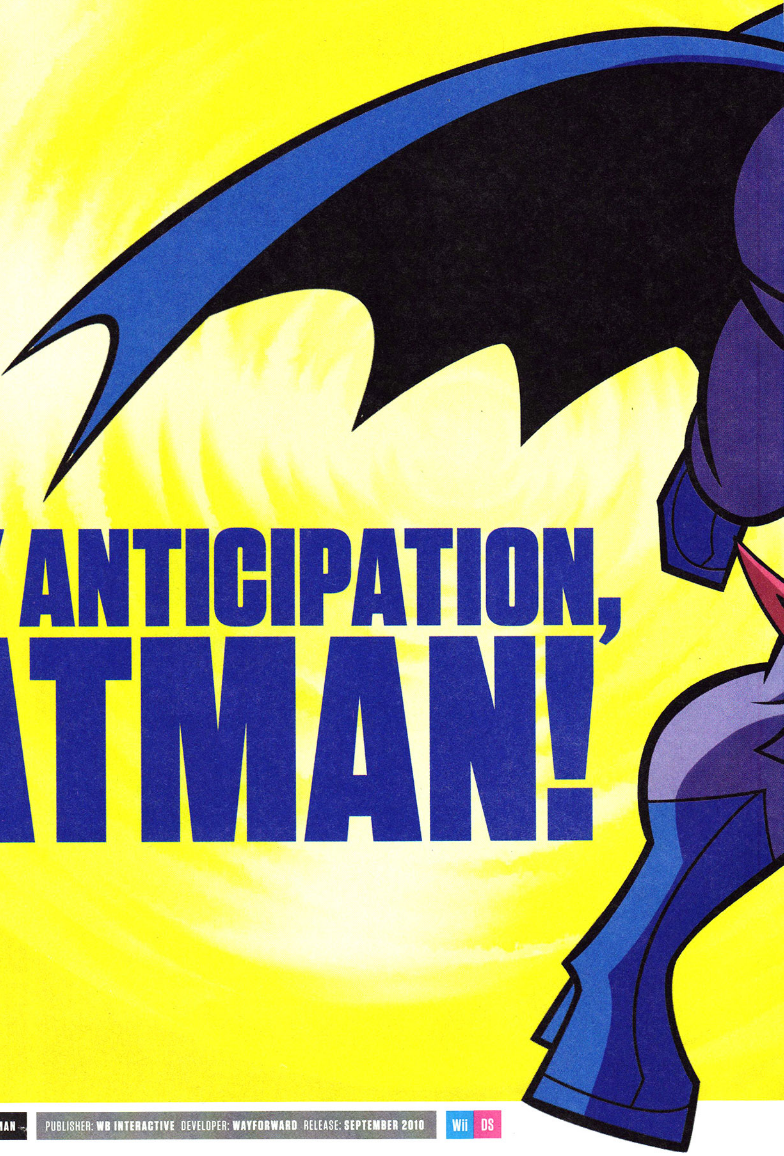
Yes, Gene Simmons's voice is in Guitar Hero: Warriors of Rock, but don't expect to see his visage while you're playing. "You won't see any rock-star avatars in the game," says Brian Bright, Warriors of Rock project lead at Neversoft. "We will have involvement from a few high-profile celebrities in different creative ways." For example, Megadeth's Dave Mustaine wrote an original song for the game titled "Sudden Death" that's based on the Quest mode's story. Bright adds, "He worked with our audio guys and our note-tracking guys.... He actually took suggestions on doubling up the solo, making it harder, changing the arrangement of the track a bit to make it just a really kick-ass song to play." Bright says that Mustaine himself didn't want his likeness to appear in-game: "He knew the story. He knew the overarching epic rock-'n'-roll journey that the story takes you on. He's like, 'It wouldn't make sense for me to be in there.' And he's right."

[Left] Recruit soldiers for your rock-'n'-roll army in the Quest mode.



Seven reasons why Batman: The Brave and the Bold: The Videogame will be one of the greatest superhero games yet

HOLY ANTICIPATION, BATMAN!

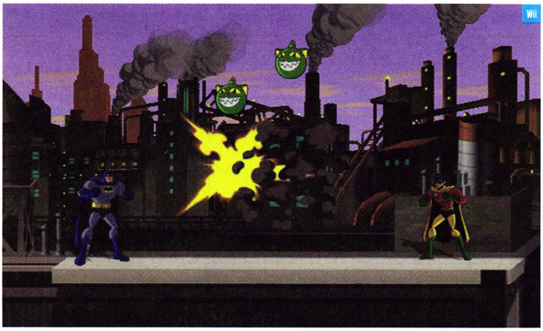


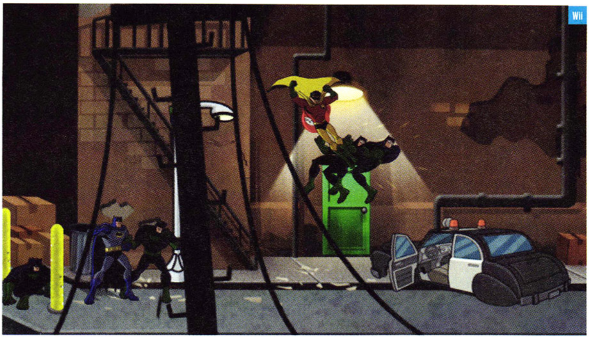
BY **CHRIS HOFFMAN**

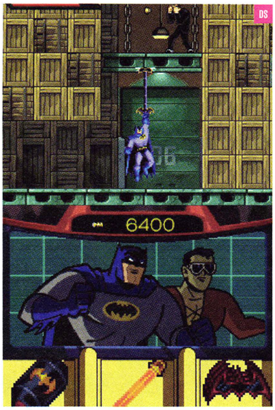
PUBLISHER: **WB INTERACTIVE** DEVELOPER: **WAYFORWARD** RELEASE: **SEPTEMBER 2010**

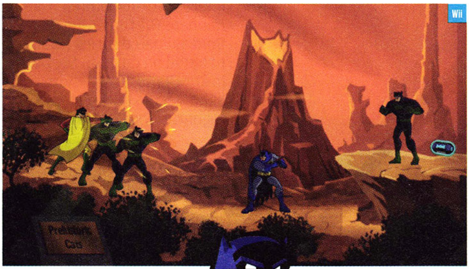
Wii DS

Batman is no stranger to video games. Players have been stepping behind the mask of the popular DC superhero for decades. But Batman: The Brave and the Bold: The Videogame (coming to both the Wii console and the Nintendo DS handheld) isn't like the character's previous interactive adventures. The *Batman: The Brave and the Bold* animated series (which debuted on Cartoon Network in 2008) presents a more lighthearted take on the protagonist—*The Dark Knight* this is not—and focuses on teamwork with characters from throughout the DC universe, and the game adaptations follow suit. That means lots of action, lots of heroics, and virtually limitless potential regarding the situations and partnerships Batman finds himself in. And with the 2-D masters at WayForward handling development duties, you can be assured that the game will look as good as it plays. Read on for the top seven reasons why Batman: The Brave and the Bold: The Videogame will put the *super* in *superhero* when it's released this September.

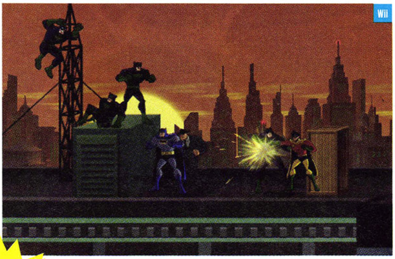


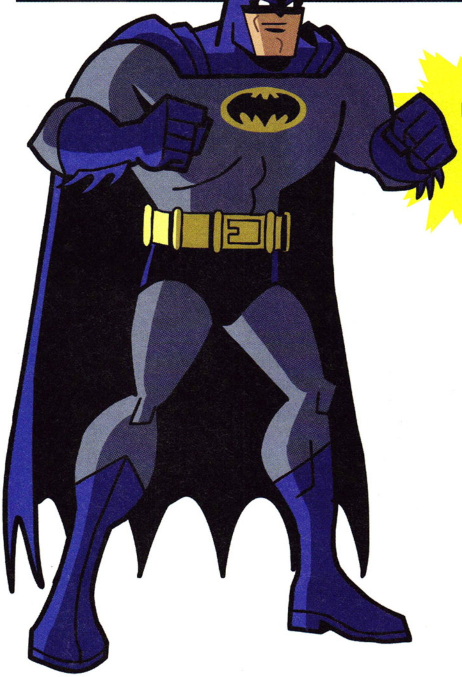






The Dynamic Duo is here to punch crime in the face!





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Classically Inspired Combat

Just as the *Batman: The Brave and the Bold* animated series is a throwback to classic comics (The Brave and the Bold was a comic-book team-up series that got its start in the 1950s), the video game adaptation very much has its roots in classic, 2-D, side-scrolling gaming. The Wii version of the game is cut from beat-'em-up cloth; you'll proceed through the levels primarily by using the A Button to unleash a flurry of attacks that will knock the stuffing out of your criminal adversaries. You'll have access to plenty of arcade-style moves; you can launch enemies into the air and follow up with massive aerial combos, stomp foes with powerful diving blows, and grab bad guys (by simultaneously pressing A and B) before using any of four different throw techniques. Wanna serve up a little extra Biff and Pow? Then shake the Wii Remote controller for a heavy attack if you have energy in your special-move meter, or pull off a powerful superattack by shaking the Wii Remote and Nunchuk controllers after you've landed 100 hits. Further emphasizing the arcade feel are numerous interactive objects (such as lampposts and newspaper racks) that you can throw or destroy, and upon defeat, the enemies release loads of coins for you to collect.

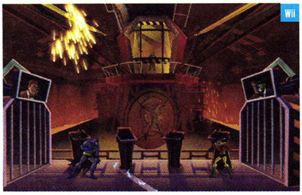
The DS version is even more retro-inspired. Combat is again an important part of the formula—you press X and Y to execute heavy and light attacks, respectively—but there's a stronger focus on platforming. Batman can utilize wall-spring jumps to climb up vertical shafts, plus he can grab onto ceilings and swing hand-over-hand. According to Sean Velasco, director of the DS version, several games of yesteryear helped define the gameplay, including all-time greats such as Mega Man X, Gunstar Heroes, and Ninja Gaiden. Inspiration doesn't get much better than that.

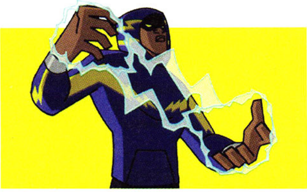
2 An All-Star Cast

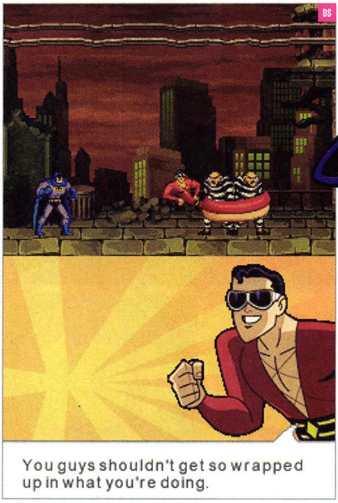
What sets The Brave and the Bold apart from other Batman games is its remarkable lineup of characters. In every episode players will have the opportunity to control a hero other than Batman, including Robin, Plastic Man, Blue Beetle, Green Lantern, and a legendary hero (who WB Interactive representatives wouldn't mention by name) that Batman idolized as a child.

"It's not just Wonder Woman and Superman," comments Wii director Adam Tierney. "It's guys like Blue Beetle. It's guys like Hawkman. It's guys that are not necessarily second tier, but guys that don't usually have the limelight. You get all these characters that you really don't see in animation or video games traditionally. It's not the same-old, same-old."

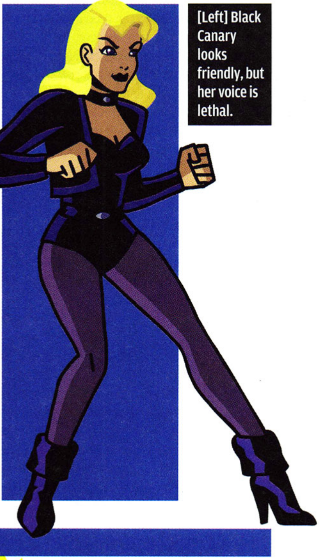
Still more superheroes appear in cameo roles. When you summon them, characters such as Black Canary, Black Lightning, and Aquaman function as smart bombs that will wipe out all the onscreen enemies. The DC rogues' gallery is well-represented, too. The first episode in the game is set in Gotham City, so the villains we saw—including the Joker, Two-Face, Cat-Man, and Catwoman—were primarily straight from Batman lore. Gorilla Grodd also appeared, but the big ape went down after only a few hits; evidently he returns later in the game to make a bigger impact. According to the developers, narrowing down the cast was tough; they had more than 200 characters to choose from!







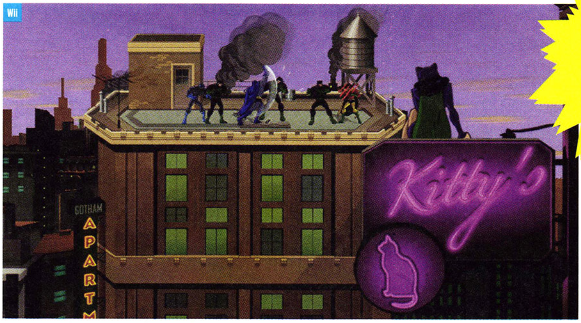
You guys shouldn't get so wrapped up in what you're doing.



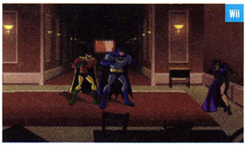
[Left] Black Canary looks friendly, but her voice is lethal.

3 Graphical Grandeur

You need only look at a few screenshots on these pages to know that The Brave and the Bold is a very, very good-looking game—which is no surprise, considering that WayForward is known for its 2-D art and animation prowess. The Wii version's backgrounds are made out of multiple layers of hand-drawn art with a layer of 3-D polygonal graphics farther in the background, while the DS version features up to 10 layers of background parallax. The colorful, detailed Wii visuals are primarily painted, not built out of tiles, so you'll never see the same thing twice, and, like in a cartoon, you'll view the action at different distances. In one especially impressive scene, Catwoman sits on a neon sign in the foreground while Batman and Robin battle thugs on a nearby rooftop. In another gorgeous moment, all the characters appear as silhouettes as the sun sets behind them. The animation is equally spectacular. The game includes more than 16,000 frames of animation, including 1,000 just for Batman himself.



[Above] Catwoman has the best seat in the house.

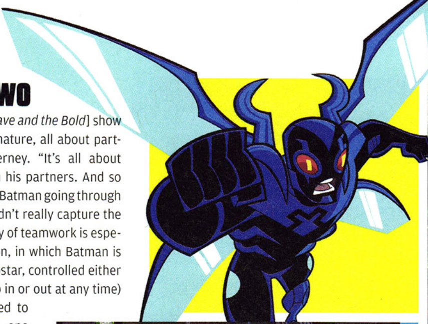


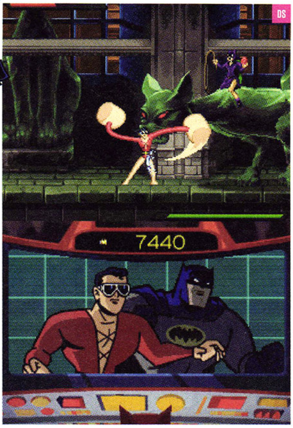
4

It Takes Two

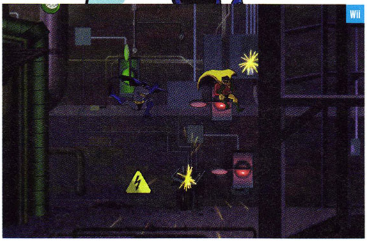
"The [*Batman: The Brave and the Bold*] show is, completely by its nature, all about partnership," asserts Tierney. "It's all about Batman working with his partners. And so we kind of knew that if we just had Batman going through the adventure by himself, it wouldn't really capture the spirit of the show." The philosophy of teamwork is especially prominent in the Wii version, in which Batman is constantly accompanied by his costar, controlled either by a second player (who can drop in or out at any time) or by AI. Players are encouraged to cooperate in battle—for instance, one player can grab an enemy and throw him across the screen, and the second player can then grab him right out of the air to inflict some punishment. (Players can also throw each other.) The characters banter back and forth as their adventure unfolds, adding extra layers of story. In the Gotham City episode, Batman and Robin constantly argue about whether Cat-Man or Catwoman is responsible for the cat-themed crimes they're encountering (spoiler: it's both) and Robin constantly chides Batman about his apparent crush on the feline femme fatale.

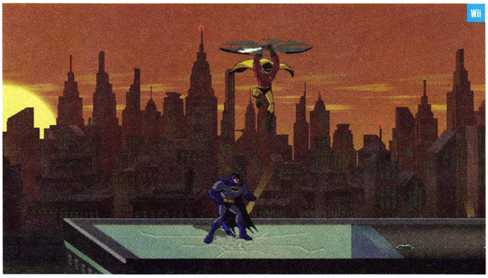
The DS game is designed for a single player, but teamwork is still important—perhaps even more so than in the Wii title. In the first episode of the handheld game, Batman teams up with Plastic Man, and players can switch between the characters at any time by tapping the touch screen. Plastic Man, as you'd expect, has completely different abilities than Batman: he can turn into an anvil to squash enemies, coil into a spring to reach new heights, and turn his arms into hammers to smash through crates and other obstacles. Plastic Man's morphing powers really come in handy when the duo takes a fall; Plastic Man acts as a parachute while Batman dispatches enemies. Even better: the two have a powerful midcombo co-op special move in which Batman swings Plastic Man around like a wrecking ball.





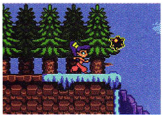
[Above] Having a partner pays off when you have to fight huge bosses like this living statue.





MOVING FORWARD

If you're not familiar with WayForward's work—where the heck have you been? Since the studio's founding in 1990, its developers have created dozens of games, primarily on Nintendo systems; many of the studio's recent titles have been especially impressive. Here are some of WayForward's most noteworthy releases.



SHANTAE

GAME BOY COLOR, 2002

Though released late in the life cycle of the Game Boy Color, the tale of charming half-genie Shantae has become a cult favorite.

SIGMA STAR SAGA

GAME BOY ADVANCE, 2005

Part outer-space shooter and part RPG, Sigma Star Saga was as unique as it was visually impressive.

CONTRA 4

DS, 2007

Handed the reigns of Konami's legendary Contra series, WayForward did the franchise proud with awesome action and insanely challenging gameplay.

A BOY AND HIS BLOB

Wii, 2009

This reimagining of an NES classic boasts amazing animation, oodles of personality, and an absolutely epic finale.

SHANTAE: RISKY'S REVENGE

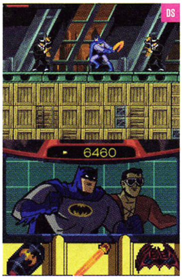
DSiWARE, 2010

This long-awaited, soon-to-be-released sequel will almost certainly be a must-buy game for Nintendo DSi owners.

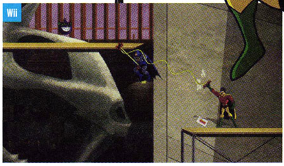
5 Oh, Those Wonderful Toys

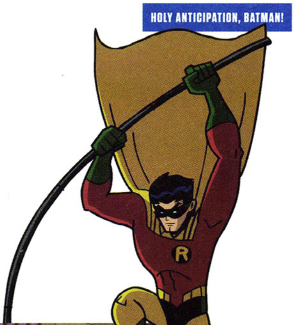
What would a Batman game be without a utility belt's worth of gizmos and gadgets? The Brave and the Bold has plenty, including the title character's handy grappling hook, which he uses to swing from grapple points and climb up ledges in both the Wii and DS versions of the game. Most of Batman's equipment is used in combat situations, though. You'll acquire a total of eight combat gadgets in the Wii title, such as a laser sword, flash grenades, a stun gun, explosives, and, of course, Batarangs. A tap of the Z Button lets you toss a Batarang at whatever's in front of you, but if you need a little more precision—say, when you're surrounded by bombs or need to hit several switches simultaneously—you can hurl Batarangs at multiple targets with pinpoint accuracy using the remote's pointer function. Batman's pals aren't empty-handed either; they each have four unique special weapons—Robin is armed with a staff, for instance.

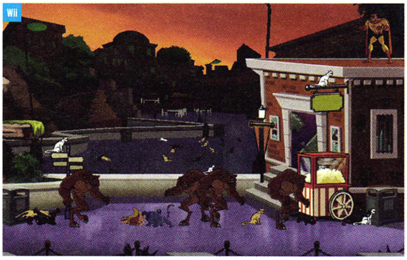
You'll unlock some new gadgets by beating levels, and acquire others by purchasing them in the Batcave in between stages; you'll be able to upgrade your existing gadgets, as well. In the DS version you'll have the opportunity to acquire electrically charged Batarangs, a deflective shield, lightning gloves, armor upgrades, health regeneration, and more. In addition, you can unlock new bat-suits in both versions of the game.



How does Batman fit all that stuff into his utility belt, anyway?







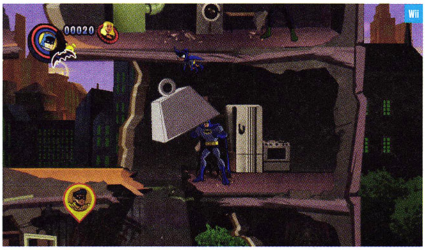
Yep—Batman's a kitty-cat. The show's sense of humor is fully intact.

6 Authentic Action

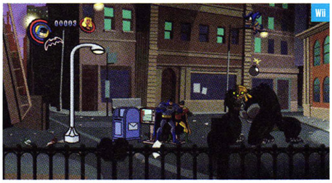
WayForward and WB Interactive are working closely with the rest of Warner Bros.—the parent company of DC Comics, and the studio responsible for the cartoon—to ensure that the game feels like an interactive episode of the TV show. The game features an animated intro by the Warner Bros. animation department, and the game's episodes are structured like the show, complete with an opening teaser segment that may or may not directly connect to the rest of episode. The Wii game offers up four full-length episodes (consisting of the intro, eight stages, and two boss fights) plus a half-length bonus episode, while the DS version contains seven episodes. There's no overarching story connecting the episodes—each one stands alone—but fans of the cartoon will recognize the show's sense of humor and many of the environments; expect locales as varied as outer space and Atlantis. Fans will also appreciate the story connections to the animated series, including one game episode that helps tie up some loose ends from an episode of the cartoon. Even the character models come directly from the animated program. Many of the cartoon talents are involved with the game, too, including the music composers, the voice actors (Diedrich Bader reprises his role as Batman), and the voice director. Speaking of voice-overs, each episode of the Wii game boasts twice as much dialogue as an episode of the show.

7 Bat-Mite!

One of the strangest—and coolest—inclusions in the game is Bat-Mite. As Batman aficionados know, Bat-Mite is a mischievous superpowered Batman fanatic from another dimension who's as likely to hinder the Caped Crusader as he is to help him. Bat-Mite functions as the in-game help system, but more significantly, if you link up the Wii and DS versions of the game, an additional player can control Bat-Mite in the Wii game using the DS system. As Bat-Mite, you can throw power-ups (red ones for health and blue ones for special-move energy) to Batman and his allies, and drop anvils and bombs on the bad guys. But, true to form, Bat-Mite can clobber the heroes as well. Bat-Mite's energy has to recharge between providing power-ups, so who can blame you if you "accidentally" toss an anvil on Batman's head while you wait? Like in the TV show, Bat-Mite is voiced by Paul Reubens (best known for his role as Pee-Wee Herman).



Look out below! When Bat-Mite's involved, no one is safe!



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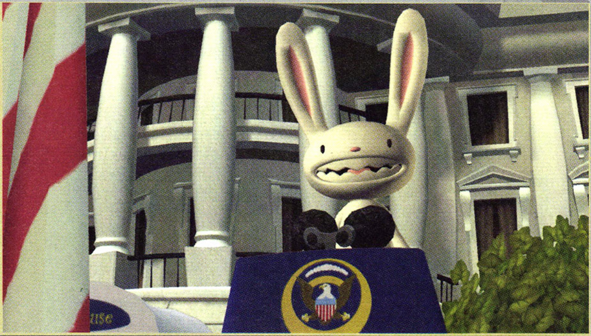
DEMOS



MODS

Current Traits
Childish
Good
Hopeless Romantic
Excitable
Easily Impressed
Evil
Excitable
Family-Oriented
Flirty
Friendly
Frugal
Excitable

Excitable Sims get excited about...pretty much everything. They enjoy an extra dose of self-satisfaction when good things happen for them in life.

PATCHES

EXPAND.GAMIN

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G. KNOWLEDGE.

BY **CHRIS HOFFMAN**

PUBLISHER: **THQ** DEVELOPER: **BLUE TONGUE (Wii), HALFBRICK (DS)** RELEASE: **SPRING 2011**

Wii DS

REENERGIZING THE RAINBOW REVOLUTION

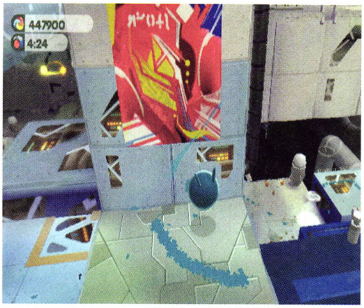
With new moves, new foes, new 2-D platforming segments, and two-player action, de Blob: The Underground is no paint-by-numbers sequel.

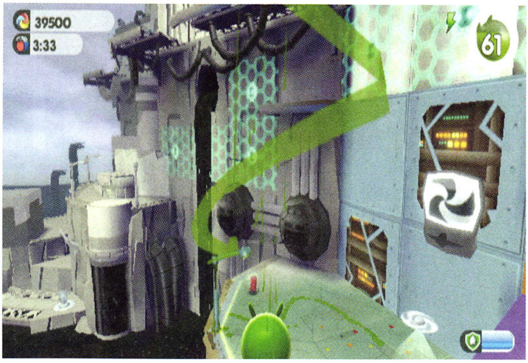
He leaps through the air, leaving a trail of blue in his wake. He splats into one monochromatic building and covers it with color, then coats another. He squashes a yellow Paintbot, whose paint blends with the blue to create a magnificent green, then he races through the streets, coloring everything in his way. As color—and life and happiness—return to the entire city block, the Raydian citizens pour out of the buildings and roar in appreciation, even as the hued hero rolls away to pounce on bad guys and liberate more oppressed people. He is Blob—one of the most successful original characters to appear on the Wii console—and he's getting ready to return in an all-new colorful adventure titled de Blob: The Underground.

News from the Underground

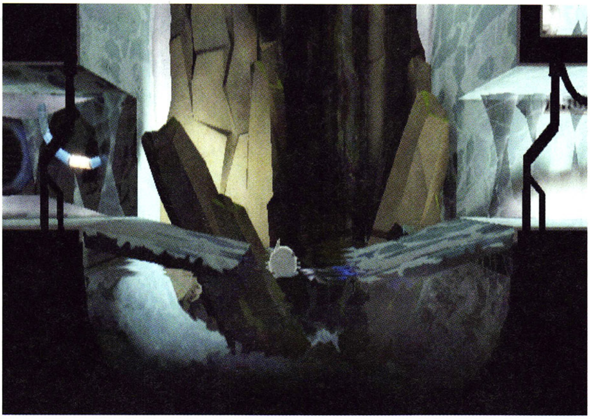
The Wii version of de Blob: The Underground begins with Blob taking a vacation on the tropical resort of Paradise Island. The R&R is well deserved; after all, he saved Chroma City by defeating Comrade Black and the evil INKT Corporation in his original adventure, so there's nothing wrong with a little fun in the sun. It doesn't take long, however, before Blob realizes that something strange is afoot. Odd occurrences lead Blob and his robot ally, Pinky, to Prisma City, where they discover that Comrade Black is back and up to no good. Pollution and materialism have turned Prisma City into a colorless, drab place, and Black has taken advantage of the situation by calling himself Papa Blanc and establishing a cult to brainwash the disillusioned city-dwellers and turn them into Blanc minions.

Once again, of course, it falls to Blob to put things right by literally painting





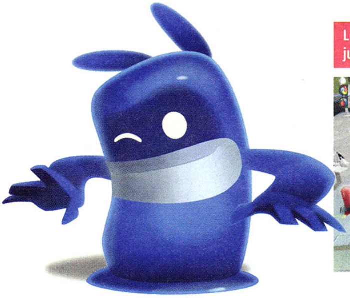
[Below] The new 2-D underground areas offer unique platforming challenges. The caverns seen here are full of ice.



the town red (or orange, yellow, green, blue, purple, or brown) and thus bringing energy and liveliness back to the populace. The core gameplay hasn't changed dramatically from that of the original de Blob—you once again grab paint from wandering Paintbots, combine colors to create new hues, splat into buildings or trees or other objects to color them, and accept an assortment of challenges from nonplayable characters—but the entire game has been improved, deepened, and enhanced. The controls have been refined so that instead of flicking the Wii Remote controller to jump, you simply press the A Button, for example, and more significant changes have been made across the board to provide a more polished experience.

"de Blob: The Underground is just better in every way," asserts executive producer Nick Hagger of developer Blue Tongue. "It looks better, plays better, [and] there's way more variety and more depth to the game."

One of the most significant additions is the new 2-D gameplay segments. The Underground mentioned in the game's title doesn't just refer to Blob's revolutionary movement to overcome the Cult of Blanc; it also speaks to the fact that you can now go indoors or literally under the world's surface—into the subways, drainage areas, and beyond—as you revitalize Prisma City. In these interior environments you'll engage in classic-style 2-D platforming (complete with obstacles such as moving platforms) while still participating in the activities that made de Blob a hit: you'll paint objects, shut down INKT bases, reactivate forgotten Prisma technology, and trigger Transformation Engines that restore large areas of the city. The underground areas can be accessed via aboveground landmarks and at other various points within Prisma City, and they promise to add plenty of gameplay variety. One underground area, for example, is a vertically scrolling stage that's been frozen over, and you must thaw it out and rescue frozen Raydians by releasing color energy.

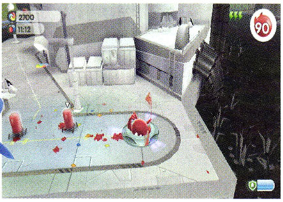


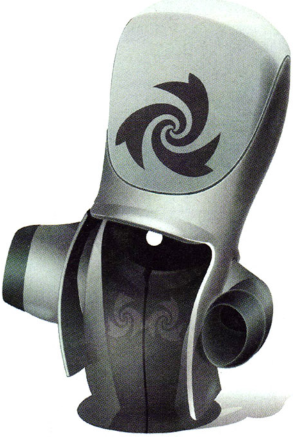
A Fresh Coat

Players should expect a lot of gameplay enhancements above ground, too. "In developing the first Blob game," comments Hagger, "we learned plenty of lessons about what it takes to make a great game, and we're applying all of them to the sequel. Our guiding philosophy is to build on all the elements that people loved about de Blob and to fix all the parts that were broken."

At the top of the list of fixes is more-focused level design. In the original de Blob, players proceeded by racking up points through free-form painting activities and/or by completing missions handed out by fellow revolutionaries. Now the levels have more structure, as well as a stronger

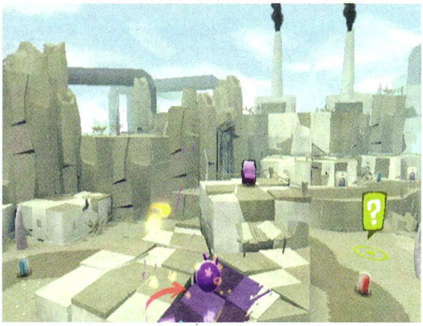
Look at all that monochromatic scenary. It's just begging to be splattered with paint!

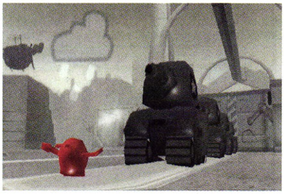




narrative to tie the adventure together. Players must now complete clearly defined story missions to get through the three sectors of a stage. But don't worry if you liked the first game's nonlinearity; there's still plenty of free-form painting and optional side missions, such as liberating people, painting everything in sight, and cleaning up polluted environments.

The missions aren't doled out in the same predictable manner, either. Whereas the first game's missions were focused on painting, combat, timed 3-D platforming, or conquering landmarks, the sequel will have a lot more diversity. Representatives of Blue Tongue and publisher THQ aren't ready to divulge a lot of details, but they promise new mission types unique to each environment, as well as multiobjective missions. One such mission could involve defeating a group of Inky defenders, shutting down enemy-spawning generators, then entering a building and reaching an underground destination to complete the challenge. There will be new characters handing out the missions, as well. Though allies Arty, Bif, Zip, and the Professor all return to help Blob, you'll receive some tasks from Prisma City locals and other new faces.





[Above] The Cult of Blanc's forces won't go down easily. According to the developers, there will be some epic boss encounters.

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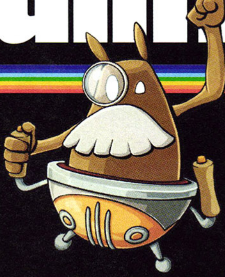
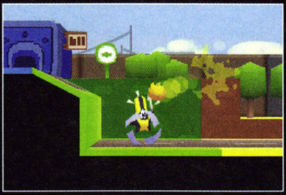
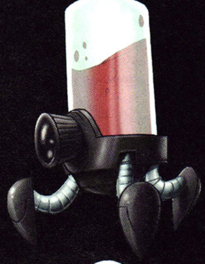
Portable Paint

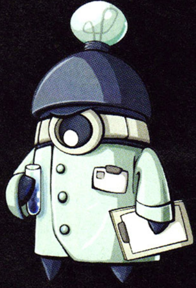




READERS WITH ESPECIALLY long memories might recall that when THQ revealed the original de Blob for Wii a few years ago, the company announced that there'd be a version for the Nintendo DS handheld as well. But while the Wii game came and went, the DS version never materialized. Fans will finally get the chance to put Blob through his portable paces, however, when de Blob: The Underground lands on DS courtesy of developer Halfbrick.

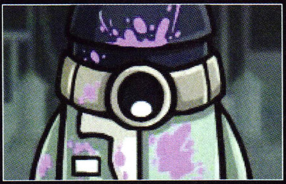
Set between the events of the two Wii titles, the DS version of de Blob: The Underground pits Blob against the evil machinations of Dr. Von Blot—Comrade Black's top scientist, who's unaware that Black's regime was already wiped out thanks to our hero's efforts. Captured and taken to Von Blot's secret underground jungle lab to be used as a research subject for diabolical mutated ink, Blob must fight his way out through numerous levels of side-scrolling 2-D action. Of course, you'll still squash Paintbots and use their color to restore life to the world, but the action is less free-roaming, and focused more on straightforward platforming fun. Even the controls are traditional; you play the game by using the Control Pad and buttons to run, jump, glide, stomp, and slingshot your way through the levels. (There's also a minigame exclusive to the Nintendo DSi that uses the camera.)



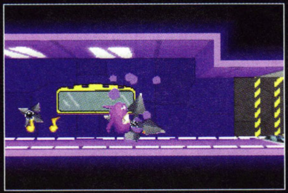


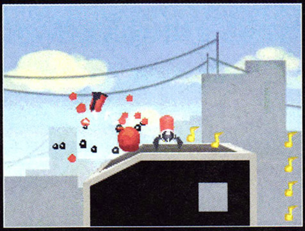
During the journey, Blob will face off against many types of INKT Corporation troops (including Inkies with electrical powers, grenade-tossing Inkies, and Inkies infected by the doc's mutated ink), team up with his helpful robotic pal Pinky (this game explains how Pinky met Blob and became part of the color revolution), track down notes that unlock hidden levels, and, naturally, square off against Dr. Von Blot himself. Between stages, the story will unfold through comic-book-style cut-scenes.

A DS iteration of de Blob has been a long time coming, but hopefully it'll prove itself to be worth the wait when it arrives alongside its Wii counterpart.



[Above] Dr. Von Blot is a bad guy with bad intentions. It's up to Blob to stop his schemes!





"de Blob: The Underground is just better in every way," asserts executive producer Nick Hagger of developer Blue Tongue. "It looks better, plays better, [and] there's way more variety and more depth to the game."

Supporting the Arts

Another focus for the creators of de Blob: The Underground is ensuring that there are constantly new things to see and do throughout the entire game, so in each of the 12 levels you'll encounter different types of obstacles and gameplay elements. Prisma State College, for example, is heavily involved in outer-space research, so the levels in that area feature a lot of antigravity technology; you'll be able to roll up walls and even cling to the ceiling for short periods of time. Other locations will make use of wind cannons to launch Blob long distances, or utilize springy piston-jump platforms to guide Blob to new places. (The familiar wall-hopping Z-jumps from the first de Blob are back, too.) Unfortunately for Blob, he'll also face several new types of enemies, including elite Inky soldiers, ice Inkies, shrINK ray-equipped troopers, and foes armed with flying hypno-discs (which the Blancs use to try to hypnotize Blob; you must shake the Wii Remote to break free of their control).

Furthermore, Blob will earn new moves throughout his quest (such as a charge attack that lets you ram enemies), and you'll be able to upgrade him with extra enhancements by collecting Inspiration Points. "A big new [task] for Blob is collecting Inspiration," Hagger explains. "Blob can earn Inspiration by doing side quests as well as collecting it in the course of his explorations. [You] can then use the Inspiration to upgrade Blob and help make him better."

By spending Inspiration Points, you'll be able to upgrade the amount of paint you can carry (which affects your health and attack power), increase how frequently you can perform special moves, boost your number of lives, and more.

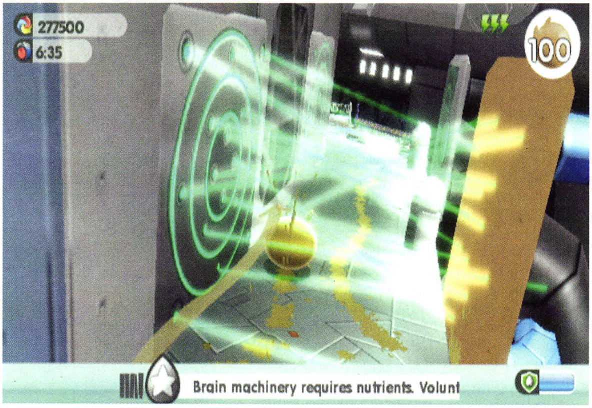
Think Pink

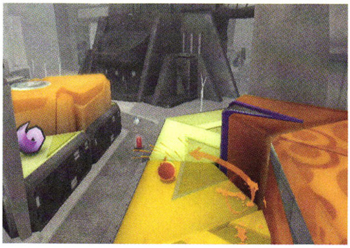
Just as exciting as all the new gameplay elements is the fact that you can enjoy them all with a friend: a second player can join in at any time to take control of Pinky, Blob's robotic companion. "Pinky is Blob's sassy robot sidekick," Hagger describes. "She was engineered by the Professor to help Blob during tough missions and to keep him from getting distracted. Pinky allows a second player to help out the primary player with a range of useful abilities, but she never gets in the way of the star of the show."

Similar to the co-op mode in Super Mario Galaxy, two-player mode enables the second player to control Pinky in the form of a cursor and assist in multiple ways. She can disable traps, help collect paint for Blob (especially useful when you need a different color that's far away), and engage in shooting-gallery events.

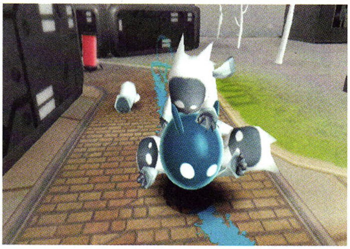
On the other hand, if co-op isn't your style, up to four players can fight it out in a dedicated versus mode instead (although Blue Tongue isn't ready to discuss specifics just yet).

Everything we've seen of de Blob: The Underground indicates that the developers have all the pieces in place to make an already solid game even better. In fact, the only problem we see is how long we'll have to wait until the game comes out; it isn't scheduled to be released until spring 2011.





[Below] It's a Blanc attack! If they grab on to you, they'll try to hug you into submission.



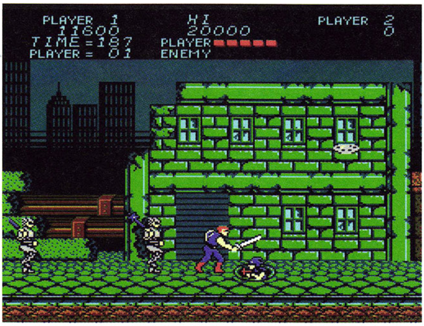
You named me Trojan? Thanks, mom and dad!

Trojan

A sword, a shield, and post-apocalyptic combat

State-of-the-Art
High Resolution Graphics
TROJAN
Licensed by Nintendo® for Play on the
Nintendo Entertainment System
GAME PAK BY CAPCOM©
CAPCOM

PLATFORM: **NES**
PUBLISHER: **CAPCOM**
DEVELOPER: **CAPCOM**
RELEASE DATE: **FEBRUARY 1987**
COVERED IN ISSUES: **NONE**
POINTS FOR FINDING A HIDDEN RAT: **1,000**



You have to feel sorry for the enemy soldier who's assigned to hide in the sewer until an unsuspecting good guy comes along.

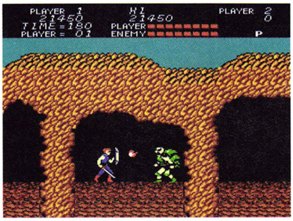
When you hear the word Trojan, you might think of the Trojan horse, the Trojan War, or the football team from USC. But if you were a gamer back in the days of the NES, Trojan probably had a different connotation altogether: sword-swinging, side-scrolling, arcade-based action from Capcom.

Despite the game's title, Trojan didn't have anything to do with the legendary city of Troy. The game was instead set in a post-apocalyptic world, complete with burly mutants, ruined buildings, technologically advanced enemy bases, and futuristic gear such as helicopter backpacks. But the gameplay would have seemed perfectly at home in a medieval or mythological setting; armed with a sword and shield, you fought your way through the enemy hordes, and the bad guys didn't use modern weapons either. They were more likely to dish out punishment with axes, crossbows, or giant clubs.

Regardless of that apparent incongruity, Trojan was a lot of fun thanks to its hack-and-slash gameplay and the inclusion of some unusual play mechanics that set it apart from other games of its day. Your sword and shield were assigned to the A and B buttons, which made defense an integral part of the action. Specialized soldiers, however, had attacks that could disarm you, forcing you to fight with punches and kicks until you recovered your equipment. A side effect of the sword- and shield-centric action was that jumping was assigned to the Up arrow on the Control Pad. Although pressing Up to jump is common now (especially in fighting games), it was fairly rare in 1987, and that inclusion gave Trojan a slightly more methodical, strategic feel. Hidden rooms, secret power-ups, and minor adventure-game elements (finding keys to open doors) added to the fun, and the game even included a two-player versus mode.

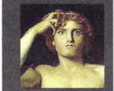
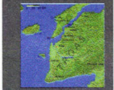
Unlike many other Capcom games, Trojan never spawned a sequel—let alone a series—but that doesn't make it any less of an excellent game. The title looked and sounded remarkable for its time, and the unique action holds its own more than 20 years later.

—CHRIS H.



MYTHBUSTED

The word *Trojan* usually refers to events surrounding the city of Troy in Greek mythology, the most significant of which is the Trojan War. The Trojan video game, however, is about something completely different. Let's see how the two stack up.

In the Trojan War:	In the Trojan video game:
 The main conflict is between the Greeks and the Trojans.	 The main conflict is between one dude and an army of freaky mutant bad guys.
 Achilles is a handsome, heroic warrior.	 Achilles is the name of an evil despotic ruler.
 Set near the city of Troy in the 12th or 13th century BC	 Set in modern cities, caves, swamps, and buildings with lots of elevators
 The conflict ended when the Greeks tricked their enemies by using the Trojan horse.	 The conflict ended when the hero jumped up and whacked Achilles in the head eight times.

HAVE A FAVORITE CLASSIC GAME YOU'D LIKE TO SEE REVISITED?
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Because **Jess** plays video games the **ESRB** (that's the Entertainment Software Rating Board) **understands** that some games aren't right for everyone.
Just like movies, **every game has a rating.** And those ratings come from the **ESRB.**
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REVIEWS

IN-DEPTH REVIEWS OF ALL THE LATE MES

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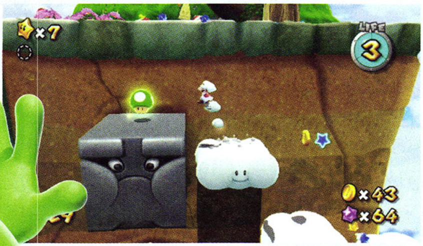
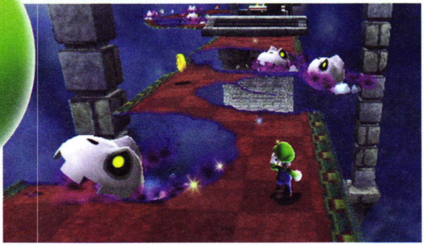
We drill down deep into Super Mario Galaxy 2. Does it live up to Mario's first ground-breaking adventure?





Space Ace

SUPER MARIO GALAXY 2

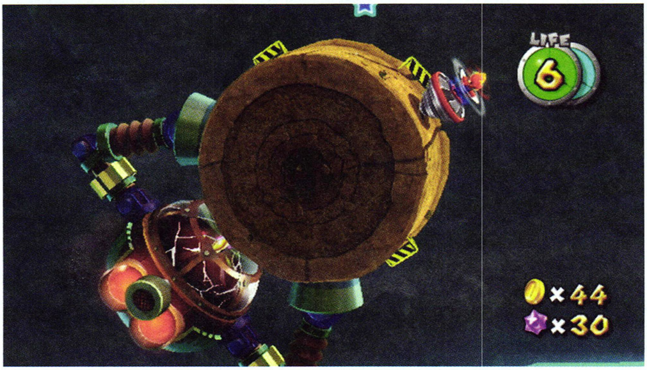
RATING: 9.5

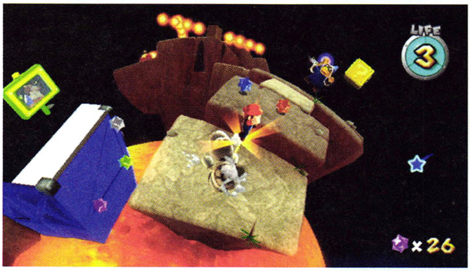
PLATFORM: **Wii**
PUBLISHER: **NINTENDO**
DEVELOPER: **NINTENDO**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

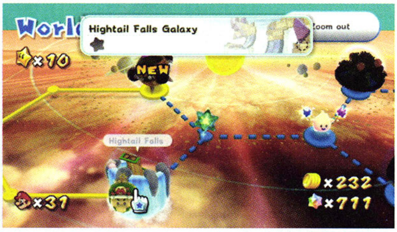
To be honest, this is one of those instances when a review isn't strictly necessary—if you're reading this magazine, chances are you're already a card-carrying, red-cap-wearing Mario fan who loved Super Mario Galaxy and plans to play the sequel—but let's make it official: Super Mario Galaxy 2 is an absolute blast.

Just about everything that was great about the first Galaxy is back in spades, and the developers have pushed the concepts introduced in that game much further. Sometimes this is accomplished with clever new uses of established play mechanics such as rolling atop a big ball, buzzing around as Bee Mario, and flipping the direction of gravity. At other times new elements are added to the mix—such as Yoshi and two extra Mario costumes—to put novel spins on past concepts. Although most of the game's enjoyment comes from re-experiencing ideas and setups that were introduced in the last go-round, there's plenty to keep Galaxy 2 feeling fresh.

Among the game's main additions is the return of Mario's trusty steed, Yoshi, who steals the show in every level he appears in. His unique abilities aren't used simply to strengthen Mario's offense; Yoshi's stages are built entirely around his skills. His flutter jump is needed to reach certain areas, and his tongue is constantly required to tug at walls, swing to new areas, and gobble







[Above] Navigating between stages is more functional but less fun.

×7
LIFE
3
×29
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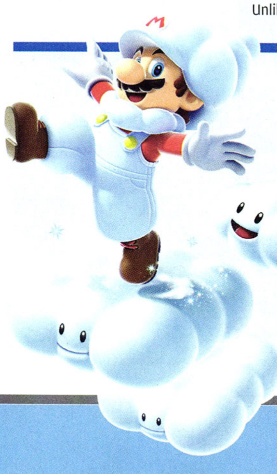
×0

up enemies to spit at targets. Thanks to new Yoshi-specific power-ups, he can also dash up walls and across water, float to high areas, and illuminate invisible pathways. All of this is incredibly entertaining, and the way in which you point the Wii Remote controller at enemies to tongue-target them is as fun as it is intuitive. All in all, Yoshi is Galaxy 2's biggest advantage over the first game.

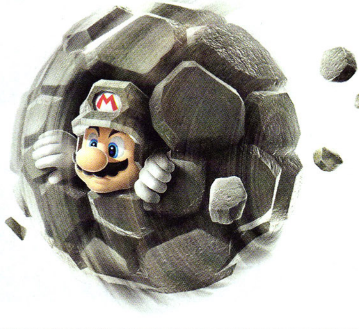
The aforementioned two new costumes add Rock Mario and Cloud Mario to the returning Bee, Boo, and Spring Mario outfits. Both are great additions: Rock Mario for the satisfying feeling that comes from steamrolling enemies, and Cloud Mario for the fun and creative ability to place up to three cloud platforms wherever you want. Cloud Mario is also one of the goofiest outfits we've ever seen our beloved plumber in, and we mean that in the best possible way. Mario's offensive arsenal is rounded out by his ability to once again toss fireballs by touching a Fire Flower, and for the first time to use a drill to dig directly through a planet to reach its opposite side. The drill is used very creatively in both fights and puzzle areas, but it doesn't appear often—I would have loved to use it much more.

Unlike in the last game, in which Mario had to hitch a ride with Rosalina and her family of Lumas (those cutesy stars with eyes), Mario has his own ship in Galaxy 2. The change is both good and bad. On the plus side, the new setup allows Mario to jump between worlds faster than before via a map screen like the ones used in the New Super Mario Bros. games. He can also, at any time, explore his new ship just as he could the old one. The problem, however, is that there isn't a compelling reason for him to do so. The ship is somewhat interesting as the holding area for a growing collection of characters Mario meets along the course of his adventure, but most of the passengers just repeat basic



CLOUD MARIO VS. ROCK MARIO

Mario's two new suits are both a blast to use, but if we had to pick a favorite it would be Cloud Mario. Not only do we love the unabashedly silly, puffy look, but the ability to produce your own platforms in a platform game is such a wonderfully creative idea that we're surprised Mario hasn't done it before now.



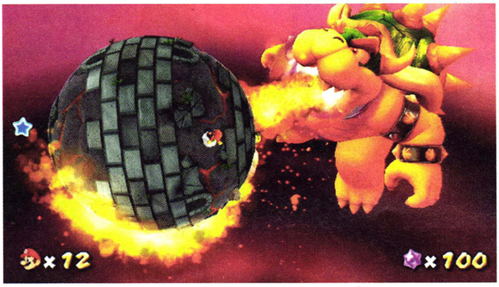
SHIP SHAPE

We're all for Mario getting his own starship for his second cruise through the cosmos, but with a crew that's there to just repeat tips you've already heard, the fact that the ship looks like Mario is the most interesting thing about it.

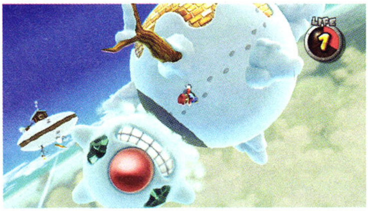
gameplay tips that need to be heard only once. Mario is, in effect, flying a beginner's tutorial through the entire game. A large purple Luma named Lubba does a bland job of filling Rosalina's role as the one who watches over your ship and explains how things work. Although the stages themselves are, of course, what really matter, I feel that this small change in structure and tone has weakened a part of Galaxy's charm. The majesty of Rosalina's ship enhanced the grand theme of exploring the cosmos and tied the stages together in a way that felt fresh for a Mario title, and the sentimental story of Rosalina's personal journey through the cosmos gave Galaxy a heart that's missing here.

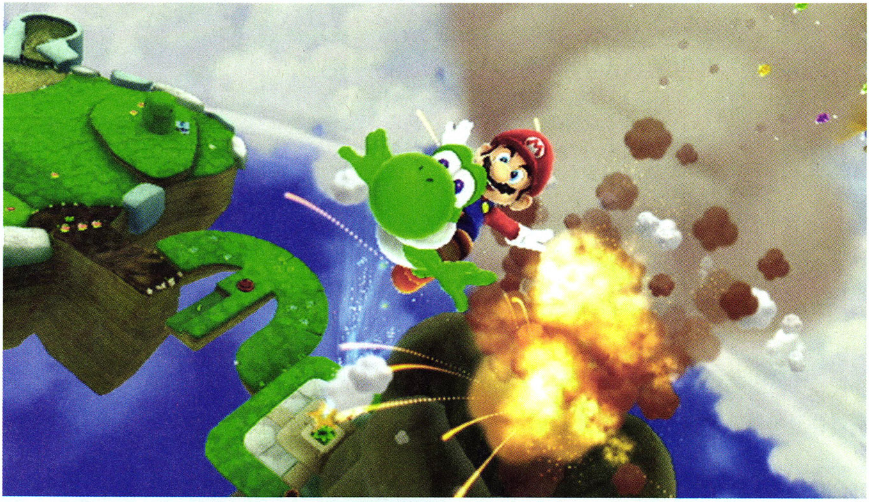
But as I say, none of that really matters the moment you enter a stage. There isn't a dud anywhere among the game's long list of levels, which offer challenges and content about as difficult and robust as those in the first Galaxy. The Prankster Comet challenges (which can be unlocked by finding Comet Medals) will give you the toughest time, but the game only rarely becomes exceedingly difficult. There is a significant number of 2-D areas (à la New Super Mario Bros. Wii), which provides a nice change of pace. I would've preferred to sink my teeth into a few more stages that focus on a single large planet—nearly all of these new levels are broken into various small chunks—but it's a very minor complaint. It's clear that—as Mario creator Shigeru Miyamoto has stated—this sequel was made because the developers couldn't stop coming up with clever ideas. Galaxy 2 packs in what is possibly the series's broadest range of gameplay elements, and that's really saying something.

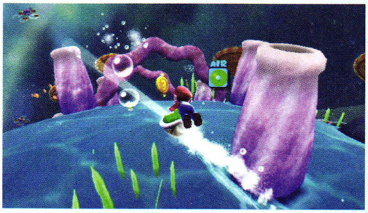
Filling out the feature set is the return of Co-Star mode and the new Cosmic Guide. Co-Star mode is pretty much the same as before, although the second player can now defeat certain enemies and pick up coins and 1-Ups in addition to Star Bits. In my experience this limited interaction isn't enough to keep either my gamer or nongamer friends interested, but if you had good luck finding a co-op partner in Galaxy, you should enjoy it just as much here. Cosmic Guide is an evolution of the Super Guide introduced in New Super Mario Bros. Wii, which offers struggling players the chance to have the game play itself through tough spots, at which point the player can choose to give the section another try or continue pro-

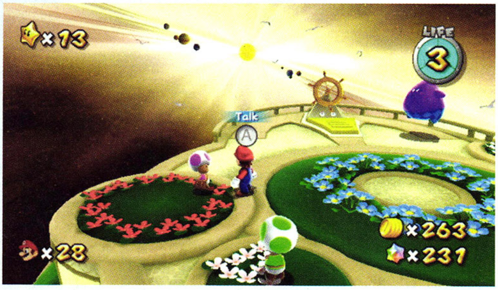


The many bosses are big and have rarely been better.









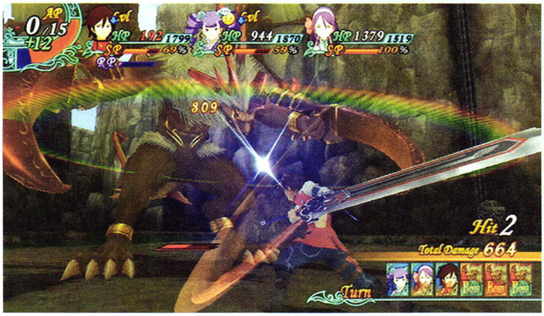
[Right] Mario soars through the stars from atop his ship.

gressing after that tough patch. Clearing a stage with assistance will earn you a bronze star instead of the usual gold one, to recognize players who put in the full effort. The option to use the guide is available only in certain stages after specific conditions have been met, such as dying a certain number of times or taking too long to clear an area. Mario veterans are less likely to encounter this feature than they were in NSMB Wii—I was offered assistance just once in my playthrough. (I promptly refused the help, of course, and stomped an extra 20 Goombas due to the insult.) The game offers further help to rookies by way of a new Tip Network. Certain areas contain a video screen that can be used to view hints on how to use Mario's abilities or pass certain spots. Both the Tip Network and Cosmic Guide seem like a fine way to help new Mario players along, and are easily ignored by those who don't want to use them.

Super Mario Galaxy 2 won't be as fondly remembered as its predecessor—no sequel to such a groundbreaking game ever is—but there's nothing at all wrong with getting more of a great thing. Unless another historic, console-defining, triple-A gaming milestone is released at some point during the next seven months, Super Mario Galaxy 2 has to be the odds-on favorite to become the 2010 Nintendo Power Wii Game of the Year. —**CHRIS S.**

BACK IN THE SADDLE

Hot on the heels of the Yoshi-filled New Super Mario Bros. Wii, it's easy to forget that Mario's green-skinned pal missed his first space-bound adventure. Cool new powered-up forms—plus fun tongue-targeting Wii pointer controls—prove that Yoshi should never again be left at home when Peach goes missing.



Rising Star

ARC RISE FANTASIA

RATING: 7.5

PLATFORM: **Wii**
PUBLISHER: **IGNITION ENTERTAINMENT**
DEVELOPER: **IMAGEEPOCH**
ESRB: **TEEN**

Given the prolificacy and popularity of role-playing games on the Nintendo DS system, it's strange that the genre hasn't been bigger on Wii. And of the handful of notable RPGs on the console, only a few have offered the traditional Japanese-RPG experience (Tales of Symphonia: Dawn of the New World being the best). That makes Arc Rise Fantasia an exciting title—the RPG-making veterans at Imageepoch (some of whom previously worked on Tales of Symphonia for GameCube) have set out to make a classic JRPG for Wii. I'm pleased to say they've done a good job of it.

Although the game is meant to fill a more-traditional mold, the developers have included several touches to make Arc Rise Fantasia somewhat unique. The battle system is turn-based, for example, but you have the option of attacking with only your strongest characters and excluding the weaker ones—heck, you can attack with only one character if you want (it's not a good idea, though). Additionally, your characters can combine their abilities, teaming up on enemies. If the three members of your party all use their Excel Acts on a single opponent, for instance, they will unleash a powerful Trinity Act.

You'll need such abilities, too, as the bosses of Arc Rise Fantasia aren't pushovers; they can often take lots of damage and they have devastating attacks. This wouldn't be so bad in and of itself (some challenge is welcome), but it's exacerbated by the infrequent save points and the nonexistent checkpoints. I understand that this is an old-school-style design decision and that you can level-grind to make things easier, but I still couldn't help but feel a bit frustrated whenever I was decimated by an adversary. (Clearly, I've been spoiled by less-demanding modern RPGs.)

My biggest issue with Arc Rise Fantasia, however, is the English voice acting. You play with a cast of initially clichéd characters—the serious hero, the naïve heroine, the dashing rogue, etc.—that transform and grow, revealing/learning secrets from their pasts and sometimes shifting their allegiances. (Characters' motivations for doing the latter aren't always logical, but that's not unusual in a JRPG.) Unfortunately, these poignant moments are undermined by the voice acting, which ranges from so-so to downright bad, with one of the worst offenders being L'Arc. (Ryfia and Adele also stand out because they seem not to be voiced by native English speakers, which can be distracting.) L'Arc's wooden delivery is egregious not just because he's the main character, but also because he often repeats the same lines in battles. (Virtually every nonboss fight is a "piece of cake," according to him.)

Despite its flaws, though, I ultimately enjoyed my time with Arc Rise Fantasia. Granted, the game shares many similarities with Namco Bandai's "Tales of" titles (due to its skits, as well as its dungeons and overworld), but that's not necessarily a bad thing. Tales of Symphonia was one of the best RPGs on GameCube, after all, and the fact that Arc Rise Fantasia comes close to replicating the feel of that game—closer than even Tales of Symphonia: Dawn of the New World in many respects—makes this title worth playing for JRPG-starved Wii owners. —**JUSTIN C.**

WRITERS' BLOCK

WHAT PERSON OR CHARACTER WOULD YOU LIKE TO PHOTOGRAPH FOR USE IN PHOTO DOJO?

JUSTIN CHENG

Jean-Claude Van Damme in his Guile getup, so I can make the sequel to the *Street Fighter: The Movie* game.

ANDREW HAYWARD

I'd pop in Maxwell from Scribblenauts and Dr. Kawashima from Brain Age and let them duke it out for the DS brain-teasing crown.

CHRIS HOFFMAN

I know it's an obvious answer, but I'd have to pick Mr. T. His projectile attack could be a Flavorwave Oven. I pity the fool who'd choose anybody else!

NATHAN MEUNIER

There's only one way to go, and that's Chuck Norris. I would make my foes quake in fear with my Chuck-fu grip.

CHRIS SLATE

I'd have a "good" version of myself fight its dark doppleganger, to better understand the duality of humanity. Or maybe Megan Fox, 'cause she's hot.

DAVID SMITH

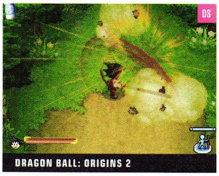
I'd like to say I don't mean any harm to any man...but I wouldn't mind having a go against a couple of my former editors.

PHIL THEOBALD

We all know that Shigeru Miyamoto is highly skilled at making video games, but does he have the strength to be victorious in the ring?

STEVE THOMASON

Segata Sanshiro. His fireball would be a giant Saturn controller. It's just a shame his greatest skill—throwing opponents to make them explode—couldn't be translated to the game.



DRAGON BALL: ORIGINS 2

DRAGON BALL: ORIGINS 2

DRAGON BALL: ORIGINS 2

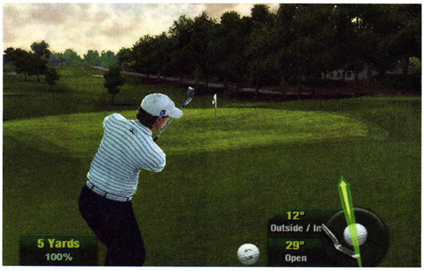
RATING: 8.0

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **NAMCO BANDAI**
DEVELOPER: **GAME REPUBLIC**
ESRB: **TEEN**

Game Republic seems to have gotten word from the powers that be that Dragon Ball: Origins wasn't nearly hard enough. For what looks like a simple 3-D action-adventure kids' game, the sequel is mercilessly tough. Even in the first round of stages, the boss battles will give any player a run for his money.

On the flip side, Origins 2 offers up a whole bunch of new ways to fight back. Monkey-tailed kid Goku can learn a huge array of moves with his fists and his magic staff, and with dedicated practice, it's not impossible to jump and teleport rings around the bad guys. There's a big difference between simply slugging away with basic combos and actually learning the more-complex ins and outs of the combat system.

Players who persevere can dig through an expanded collection of bonus content, from little collectible figures and dioramas (since anime fans can't resist cute bits of plastic) to a "survival tower" full of souped-up boss battles. Whether many of us will want to relive those challenges—especially since the tower versions are usually even harder—is an open question. Dragon Ball fans with something to prove, though, should find themselves right at home. **—DAVID S.**



Hole in One

TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 11

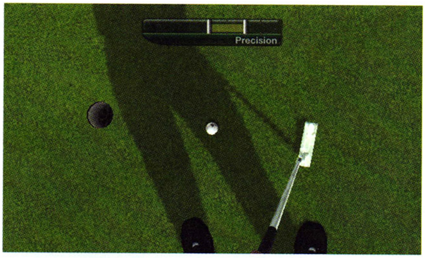
RATING: 9.0

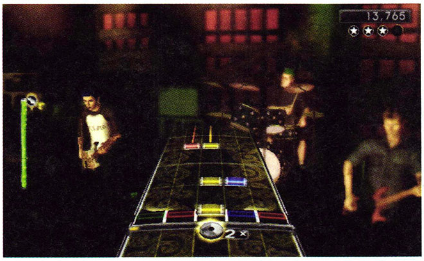
PLATFORM: **Wii**
PUBLISHER: **ELECTRONIC ARTS**
DEVELOPER: **EA TIBURON**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

My experience playing with the new advanced swing types in Tiger Woods PGA Tour 11 replicates the real sport to a tee. I frequently find myself dropping to my knees, cursing Odin or whatever other gods I can think of at that moment, then giving serious consideration to chucking my Wii Remote and television into the nearest body of water. My bathtub, perhaps. Yet like any hopelessly addicted duffer, I keep coming back for more.

With the Wii MotionPlus accessory, PGA Tour 11 can measure every aspect of your swing, offering a level of authenticity that goes beyond even that of last year's game. On the lower difficulty settings, the game is fairly forgiving of the flaws in your swing, but I highly recommend graduating to the advanced levels as you hone your skills. It'll give you a greater understanding of golf and deliver a stronger sense of satisfaction when you succeed. Just be sure there aren't any loved ones around when you embarrass yourself with the occasional tantrum.

Along with the core gameplay enhancements comes a host of new features, including the Ryder Cup event, miniature golf, and skill challenges. Plus, the online functionality is as robust as you'll find in any Wii game. You can even transfer your real-life golf stats to your in-game golfer using EA's Tee Shot Live service. Though Tiger's reputation may be tarnished, his video game has never been better. **—STEVE T.**





Having a Blast

GREEN DAY: ROCK BAND

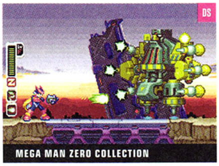
RATING: 8.0

PLATFORM: **Wii**
PUBLISHER: **MTV GAMES**
DEVELOPER: **HARMONIX/DEMIURGE STUDIOS**
ESRB: **TEEN**

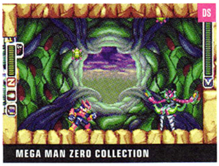
You don't have to be a die-hard Green Day fan to enjoy Green Day: Rock Band, but it definitely helps. From the track list to the unlockable photos and videos of the band, this title is packed with fan-pleasing Green Day goodness. But those looking for just another excuse to break out their plastic instruments should be content, too, as the excellent Rock Band gameplay remains as fun as ever.

With a soundtrack composed of 47 songs—many of which should be familiar even to those who don't pay attention to the music scene—this game has something for almost everyone. I am a bit disappointed that there's nothing pre-*Dookie*, though; it would have been great had the game been more comprehensive, following Green Day's entire career instead of starting with the period when the band made it big. Additionally, the title lacks visual diversity. One thing that I really liked about The Beatles: Rock Band was that it included fantastical levels that complemented specific songs; Green Day: Rock Band has only three real-world-based venues. Sure, these venues are meant to represent significant points in the band's history, but there was ample opportunity to give the game a bit more variety. Of course, this is a relatively minor complaint, as players are often not paying attention to the backgrounds, focusing instead on the numerous notes coming down the screen.

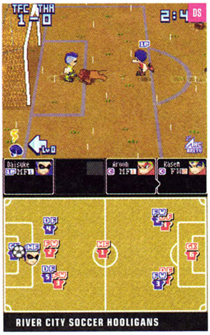
Sure, it's not quite as good as the outstanding Beatles-centric Rock Band, but Green Day: Rock Band is a great game nonetheless. Green Day has plentiful hits in its library, and it's awesome to be able to have—and more importantly, play—them all in one place. **—JUSTIN C.**



MEGA MAN ZERO COLLECTION



MEGA MAN ZERO COLLECTION



RIVER CITY SOCCER HOOLIGANS

MEGA MAN ZERO COLLECTION

RATING: 9.0

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **CAPCOM**
DEVELOPER: **INTI CREATES**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

The problem with great games is that they can go out of print, making them far more difficult (and expensive) to find. Capcom is doing its part to help combat this problem with the release of this new collection, which contains the four Mega Man Zero games that were originally released for Game Boy Advance.

These four titles were some of the GBA's finest, so having them all in one package is a tremendous deal. Even though the oldest game here is eight years old, they all hold up extremely well today. The platforming action is as tight and well designed as you would expect from a 2-D Mega Man game, and the ability to use Cyber Elves (sentient programs that boost your power) adds some depth to the gameplay. It's interesting to see how the Cyber Elf system evolves and is refined throughout each of the games, as well.

The pixel-based artwork is gorgeous, and the animation is frequently stunning. On the default settings, the games prove to be rather challenging, but a new easy mode helps keep things accessible. Ample unlockable goodies encourage you to play through all four titles.

Given the games' GBA origins, the DS touch screen isn't put to any important use. It simply displays artwork while you play the game on the top screen. Of course, this is a minor complaint. If you missed any of these games the first time around, this is the perfect chance to grab the lot of 'em. **—PHIL T.**

RIVER CITY SOCCER HOOLIGANS

RATING: 7.0

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **AKSYS GAMES**
DEVELOPER: **ARC SYSTEM WORKS**
ESRB: **TEEN**

This isn't like other soccer games. What it *is* like is a trickier question. Imagine, maybe, Super Dodge Ball only with more moves, more motion, and more aggressive opponents. In theory, you're supposed to put the ball in the net, not beat the other team into submission. In practice... well...either works.

Controlling just one player is a difficult adjustment. You don't switch as the ball moves around; the rest of the squad responds only to general AI strategy commands. The bottom screen shows an overview of where everyone is, but it's tough to look away from the top screen when the ball-handler might get cold-cocked at any moment. Still, it's something different, and Dodge Ball die-hards should love the extra challenge. **—DAVID S.**

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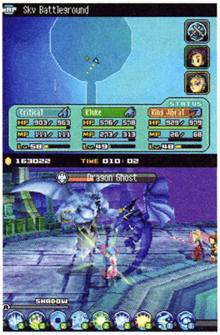
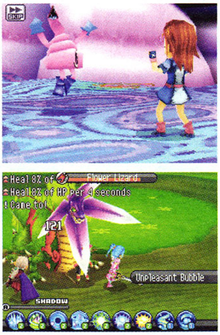
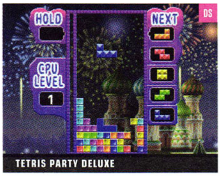
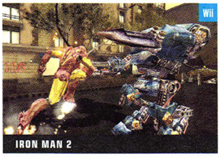


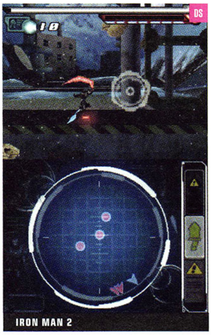




TETRIS PARTY DELUXE



IRON MAN 2



IRON MAN 2

Deep Shadows

BLUE DRAGON: AWAKENED SHADOW

RATING: 7.5

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **D3PUBLISHER**
DEVELOPER: **NAMCO BANDAI/TRI-CRESCENDO**
ESRB: **EVERYONE 10+**

After last year's unpolished Blue Dragon Plus, I doubt many RPG fans had high expectations for the franchise's next installment. But new developers Namco Bandai and tri-Crescendo have approached Blue Dragon: Awakened Shadows with fresh ideas and grander ambitions, and have crafted a surprisingly solid game.

In the franchise's latest reinvention, players design their own hero and are joined by the usual Blue Dragon cast as NPC allies. The game's real-time battle system is well thought out and fun, although excessive lag when casting spells, weak ally AI, and some overly difficult bosses may cause a bit of frustration. The most impressive feature of Awakened Shadows is its wide-open world; the game's hub city is full of lengthy side quests and interdimensional doorways that lead to optional boss fights. When you earn the right to fly a Mechat airship, you'll be able to visit several new cube-worlds at any time you like, offering even more freedom. The simple level designs don't offer a lot of variety, but random equipment drops, new spells, and unlockable shadows offer plenty of incentive to keep playing. And if you can convince your friends to buy the game, you'll be able to challenge some of the optional quests in two- or three-man parties, over either a local wireless connection or Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection.

Awakened Shadows continues the ongoing Blue Dragon storyline, which may please the series's handful of fans but will probably bore any newcomers. Elaborate side quests that revolve around one annoying character trying to make a birthday present for another annoying character may not make for riveting drama, but strong fundamentals make even the weakest parts of the game fun to play. **—CASEY L.**

TETRIS PARTY DELUXE

RATING: 8.5

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **MAJESCO**
DEVELOPER: **HUDSON SOFT/TETRIS ONLINE**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

It's been years since DS owners have been treated to a proper taste of Tetris. Even though the timeless classic has been released in many different formats over the years, it's still just as fun to pick up and play as it ever was. Tetris Party Deluxe's biggest draw is the glut of different solo and multiplayer modes it crams onto a single game card.

Modes such as Sprint, Field Climber, Stage Racer, Shadow, and Bombliss are among those that stretch out the core gameplay in interesting and enjoyable directions, since each offers a unique twist on the original concept. The local and online multiplayer features are equally expansive. This is definitely one to enjoy with a few friends. **—NATHAN M.**

IRON MAN 2

RATING: 4.0

PLATFORM: **Wii**
PUBLISHER: **SEGA**
DEVELOPER: **HIGH VOLTAGE SOFTWARE**
ESRB: **TEEN**

Sega struggled to deliver a compelling superhero experience with the first Iron Man game, but even now, armed with a new developer and a second playable hero, the sequel falls similarly flat. Iron Man 2 splits up the action between on-foot and flying segments, but neither approach convincingly conveys what it should feel like to play as Iron Man or War Machine. Though the on-rails flying segments lack thrills, at least they handily beat the dull, lifeless ground levels, which could have come from any sci-fi action game. Wrap that fact up with a forgettable story and some really shaky visuals, and you have an Iron Man game that even hardcore fans should pass on. **—ANDREW H.**

IRON MAN 2

RATING: 6.5

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **SEGA**
DEVELOPER: **GRIPTONITE GAMES**
ESRB: **EVERYONE 10+**

The Nintendo DS iteration of Iron Man 2 puts you in command of both Iron Man and War Machine in a pretty standard side-scrolling shooting adventure, but the variety between characters and campaign stages makes for a better-than-average film tie-in. Iron Man's levels use the Control Pad and buttons to let him zip around the stage and beat up robot foes, while War Machine's missions rely heavily on the touch screen to launch grenades and unleash chain-gun fury on nearby enemies. Occasional airborne shoot-'em-up stages help to keep things lively, as do the numerous suit upgrades for each hero. Iron Man 2 still has its tedious moments (and a bland storyline), but it unquestionably tops the weak Wii version. **—ANDREW H.**

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REVIEWS ARCHIVE

THE COMPLETE LIST OF NINTENDO POWER REVIEWS FROM THE PAST YEAR

SCORES REFLECT INDIVIDUAL REVIEWERS' OPINIONS

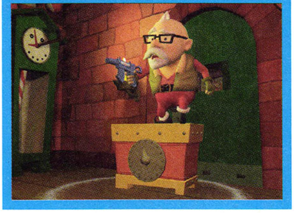
Wii

TITLE	SCORE	PUBLISHER	VOL.	ESRB
2010 FIFA World Cup South Africa	6.5	Electronic Arts	254	E
Academy of Champions: Soccer	6.5	Ubisoft	248	E
All Star Karate	7.0	THQ	255	E10+
Astro Boy: The Video Game	7.5	D3Publisher	248	E10+
Attack of the Movies 3D	4.0	Majesco	255	T
Avatar: The Game	5.0	Ubisoft	250	T
The Beatles: Rock Band	9.0	MTV Games	247	T
The Bigs 2	6.0	2K Sports	244	E10+
Boom Blox Bash Party	8.0	Electronic Arts	243	E
A Boy and His Blob	8.5	Majesco	247	E
Call of Duty: Modern Warfare: Reflex	9.0	Activision	249	M
Calling	5.0	Hudson	253	T
The Conduit	8.0	Sega	243	T
Cursed Mountain	7.0	Deep Silver	246	M
Dance Dance Revolution: Hottest Party 3	6.5	Konami	248	E10+
Data East Arcade Classics	6.5	Majesco	252	T
Dead Space Extraction	8.0	Electronic Arts	247	M
Destiny of Zorro	2.5	505	243	E10+
DiRT 2	4.5	Codemasters	247	E10+
DJ Hero	8.5	Activision	249	T
Dragon Ball: Revenge of King Piccolo	6.5	Namco Bandai	248	E10+
Drawn to Life: The Next Chapter	7.0	THQ	248	E
Endless Ocean: Blue World	7.5	Nintendo	252	E10+
Family Fun Football	4.5	Tecmo	247	E
FIFA Soccer 10	6.0	Electronic Arts	248	E
Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles: The Crystal Bearers	8.0	Square Enix	250	T
Fragile Dreams: Farewell Ruins of the Moon	5.5	XSEED	253	T
Ghostbusters: The Video Game	7.5	Atari	243	E10+
G.I. Joe: The Rise of Cobra	5.0	Electronic Arts	246	T
Grand Slam Tennis	7.5	Electronic Arts	243	E
Guitar Hero 5	8.0	Activision	247	T
Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince	5.5	Electronic Arts	244	E10+
Harvest Moon: Animal Parade	7.5	Natsume	248	E
Help Wanted	4.5	Hudson	242	E10+
Indiana Jones and the Staff of Kings	7.5	LucasArts	243	T
Jambo! Safari	3.5	Sega	250	E
Ju-On: The Grudge	6.0	XSEED	247	M
Karaoke Revolution	6.0	Konami	248	T
LEGO Indiana Jones 2: The Adventure Continues	6.5	LucasArts	249	E10+
LEGO Rock Band	8.0	Warner Bros.	249	E10+
Let's Tap	7.0	Sega	243	E
Little King's Story	9.0	XSEED	244	T
Madden NFL 10	8.0	Electronic Arts	245	E
Major League Baseball 2K10	7.0	2K Sports	253	E
Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Winter Games	7.0	Sega	247	E
Marvel Ultimate Alliance 2	5.5	Activision	248	T
Mini Ninjas	7.5	Eidos	247	E10+
Monster Hunter Tri	9.0	Capcom	254	T
The Munchables	7.0	Namco Bandai	243	E
Muramasa: The Demon Blade	8.0	Ignition	246	T
MySims Agents	7.0	Electronic Arts	247	E
Naruto Shippuden: Clash of Ninja Revolution 3	7.5	Tomy	249	T
NBA 2K10	6.0	2K Sports	247	E
Need for Speed Nitro	7.0	Electronic Arts	249	E10+
New Super Mario Bros. Wii	9.0	Nintendo	249	E
NHL 2K10	8.0	2K Sports	246	E10+
No More Heroes 2: Desperate Struggle	9.0	Ubisoft	252	M
Overlord: Dark Legend	7.0	Codemasters	244	T
Phantom Brave: We Meet Again	8.0	NIS America	243	T
Pinball Hall of Fame: The Gottlieb Collection	6.5	Crave	251	E
Pirates Plundarrr	4.0	Majesco	255	E10+
Prince of Persia: The Forgotten Sands	8.0	Ubisoft	255	T
Pro Evolution Soccer 2010	8.0	Konami	250	E
Punch-Out!!	8.5	Nintendo	242	E10+
Rabbids Go Home	7.0	Ubisoft	249	E10+
Racquet Sports	6.5	Ubisoft	253	E
Red Steel 2	8.0	Ubisoft	254	T
Resident Evil: The Darkside Chronicles	8.0	Capcom	249	M
Sakura Wars: So Long, My Love	7.5	NIS America	253	T
Sam & Max: Beyond Time and Space	8.0	Atari	255	T
Shaun White Snowboarding: World Stage	7.0	Ubisoft	249	E
Shiren the Wanderer	6.5	Atlus	252	T
Silent Hill: Shattered Memories	8.0	Konami	249	M
SimAnimals Africa	5.0	Electronic Arts	248	E
The Sky Crawlers: Innocent Aces	7.0	XSEED	250	T
Sonic & Sega All-Stars Racing	8.0	Sega	252	E
Spectrobes: Origins	5.5	Disney	246	E10+
Spore Hero	7.0	Electronic Arts	247	E10+
Spyborgs	7.5	Capcom	247	T
Star Wars The Clone Wars: Republic Heroes	5.0	LucasArts	249	T
Super Monkey Ball Step & Roll	5.5	Sega	252	E
Tatsunoko vs. Capcom: Ultimate All-Stars	9.0	Capcom	251	T
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Smash-Up	7.5	Ubisoft	247	E10+
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 10	9.0	Electronic Arts	243	E
Tornado Outbreak	6.5	Konami	247	E10+
Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen	5.5	Activision	245	T
Trauma Team	8.0	Atlus	255	T
Up	6.5	THQ	242	E
Valhalla Knights: Eldar Saga	4.0	XSEED	246	T
Virtua Tennis 2009	7.0	Sega	244	E
Wii Sports Resort	8.5	Nintendo	245	E
WWE SmackDown vs. Raw 2010	7.5	THQ	248	T
X-Men Origins: Wolverine	5.0	Activision	243	T

MORE ON:

SAM & MAX: BEYOND TIME AND SPACE

I *wanted* to like the first season of Sam & Max, but I was ultimately disappointed. Fortunately, the second season, Beyond Time and Space, is a significant step up thanks to its crazier situations and funnier jokes. The frame rate could be better, though. —JUSTIN C.



MORE ON:

RED STEEL 2

If you were one of the thousands disappointed by the first Red Steel, don't let the name scare you away from this vastly improved sequel. The swordplay in Red Steel 2 is immensely satisfying—thanks in large part to its use of the Wii MotionPlus accessory—and the Far East-meets-Old West aesthetic is a heck of a lot more interesting than the original game's generic Yakuza motif. —STEVE T.

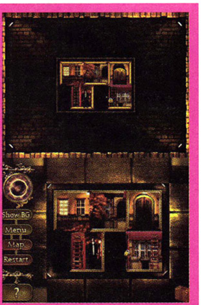
Nintendo DS

TITLE	SCORE	PUBLISHER	VOL.	ESRB
Ace Attorney Investigations: Miles Edgeworth	**8.0**	Capcom	252	T
Again	**7.0**	Tecmo Koei	253	T
Ant Nation	**2.0**	Konami	245	E
Assassin's Creed II: Discovery	**7.0**	Ubisoft	250	T
Atelier Annie: Alchemists of Sera Island	**8.0**	NIS America	248	E10+
Avatar: The Game	**5.0**	Ubisoft	250	E10+
Beat City	**8.5**	THQ	254	E
Bejeweled Twist	**8.5**	PopCap	251	E
Black Sigil: Blade of the Exiled	**5.0**	Graffiti	242	E
Bleach: The 3rd Phantom	**4.0**	Sega	246	T
Bookworm DS	**8.5**	PopCap	249	E
Cooking Mama 3: Shop & Chop	**6.0**	Majesco	248	E
C.O.P. The Recruit	**4.0**	Ubisoft	249	T
C.O.R.E.	**5.5**	Graffiti	242	M
Crime Scene	**5.0**	SouthPeak	253	M
Dawn of Discovery	**8.5**	Ubisoft	244	E
Dawn of Heroes	**7.5**	Majesco	253	E10+
Deca Sports DS	**5.5**	Hudson	253	E
Dementium II	**8.0**	SouthPeak	255	M
Dragon Ball Z: Attack of the Saiyans	**8.0**	Namco Bandai	248	E10+
Drawn to Life: The Next Chapter	**8.0**	THQ	248	E
Fighting Fantasy: The Warlock of Firetop Mountain	**4.0**	Aspyr	248	T
Fossil Fighters	**8.0**	Nintendo	246	E
G.I. Joe: The Rise of Cobra	**5.0**	Electronic Arts	245	E10+
Glory of Heracles	**7.0**	Nintendo	251	E10+
Guitar Hero On Tour: Modern Hits	**7.0**	Activision	244	E10+
Harvest Moon: Frantic Farming	**8.0**	Natsume	243	E
Harvest Moon: Sunshine Islands	**7.0**	Natsume	248	E
Hero's Saga: Laevatein Tactics	**7.0**	Aksys	247	T
IL-2 Sturmovik: Birds of Prey	**4.0**	505	246	E10+
Infinite Space	**8.0**	Sega	253	T
Jake Hunter Detective Story: Memories of the Past	**6.0**	Aksys	242	T
Kingdom Hearts 358/2 Days	**9.0**	Square Enix	247	E10+
Knights in the Nightmare	**8.0**	Atlus	243	T
The Legend of Zelda: Spirit Tracks	**9.5**	Nintendo	250	E10+
The Legendary Starfy	**7.0**	Nintendo	243	E
LEGO Battles	**5.0**	Warner Bros.	243	E
LEGO Indiana Jones 2: The Adventure Continues	**5.0**	LucasArts	249	E10+
Magician's Quest: Mysterious Times	**7.5**	Konami	242	E10+
Mario & Luigi: Bowser's Inside Story	**9.5**	Nintendo	246	E
Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Winter Games	**8.0**	Sega	247	E
Mega Man Star Force 3: Red Joker/Black Ace	**6.0**	Capcom	244	E
Miami Law	**3.0**	Hudson	243	T
Might & Magic: Clash of Heroes	**8.5**	Ubisoft	247	E10+
Mini Ninjas	**6.0**	Eidos	247	E10+
Naruto Shippuden: Ninja Council 4	**5.0**	Tomy	243	E10+
Naruto Shippuden: Ninja Destiny 2	**7.0**	Tomy	247	T
Nostalgia	**7.0**	Ignition	248	E10+
Overlord Minions	**7.0**	Codemasters	244	E10+
Phantasy Star 0	**8.0**	Sega	248	E10+
Picross 3D	**7.5**	Nintendo	255	E
Pokémon HeartGold Version	**9.5**	Nintendo	253	E
Pokémon Mystery Dungeon: Explorers of Sky	**8.0**	Nintendo	248	E
Pokémon SoulSilver Version	**9.5**	Nintendo	253	E
Professor Layton and the Diabolical Box	**8.0**	Nintendo	246	E10+
Rabbids Go Home	**7.0**	Ubisoft	249	E
Ragnarok DS	**5.0**	XSEED	252	E10+
Roogoo Attack	**4.0**	SouthPeak	243	E
Rooms: The Main Building	**7.0**	Hudson	253	E
Sands of Destruction	**7.0**	Sega	250	T
Scribblenauts	**9.0**	Warner Bros.	247	E10+
Shin Megami Tensei: Devil Survivor	**8.0**	Atlus	244	T
Shin Megami Tensei: Strange Journey	**8.0**	Atlus	253	M
Sonic & Sega All-Stars Racing	**6.0**	Sega	252	E
Sonic Classic Collection	**7.0**	Sega	253	E
Space Bust-A-Move	**7.0**	Taito	245	E
Space Invaders Extreme 2	**8.0**	Square Enix	248	E
Spore Hero Arena	**5.0**	Electronic Arts	247	E
Squishy Tank	**8.0**	Natsume	253	E
Star Wars Battlefront: Elite Squadron	**5.5**	LucasArts	249	E10+
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Arcade Attack	**4.5**	Ubisoft	248	E10+
Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen	**7.0**	Activision	245	E10+
WarioWare D.I.Y.	**8.5**	Nintendo	253	E
WireWay	**6.5**	Konami	249	E
A Witch's Tale	**4.0**	NIS America	247	E10+
The Wizard of Oz: Beyond the Yellow Brick Road	**6.5**	XSEED	246	E
WWE SmackDown vs. Raw 2010	**7.0**	THQ	248	T

MORE ON:

ROOMS: THE MAIN BUILDING

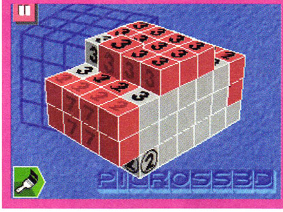
Is there any game with a more boring title than Rooms: The Main Building? OK, Drone Tactics comes close, but Rooms, with its primarily brown color palette, just seems as sleep-inducing as a game can get. Appearances are deceiving, however; beneath its dull veneer lies a clever and unique puzzle game. —CHRIS H.



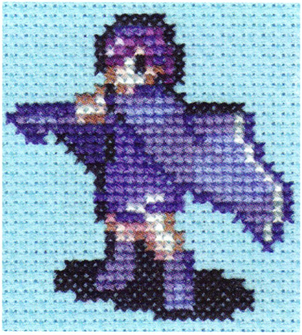
MORE ON:

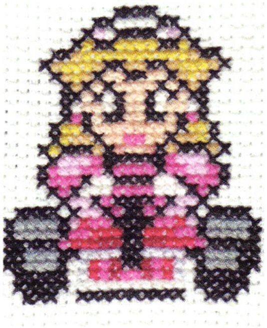
PICROSS 3D

This 3-D version of the popular paint-by-numbers puzzles is a time machine—pick it up and the hours fly by. The 3-D approach works better as a video game than Nintendo's previous 2-D iterations, with a more interactive interface that feels like it was born on a game system and not a piece of paper. —CHRIS S.



COMMUNITY





FANDOM

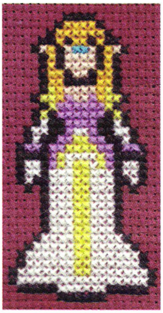
Cross-Stitched Classics

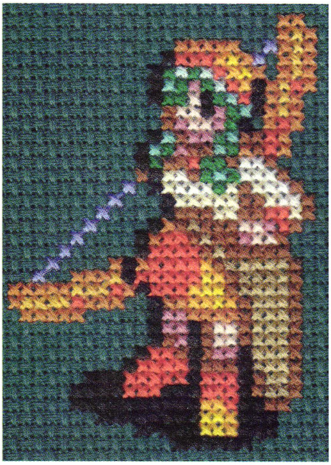
Pixel-perfect characters re-created with fabric

THE GRID FORMAT of cross-stitching proves perfect for re-creating the pixel-based graphics of past generations, and reader Allison Bates has been using the art form to pump out embroidered versions of her favorite classic game characters.

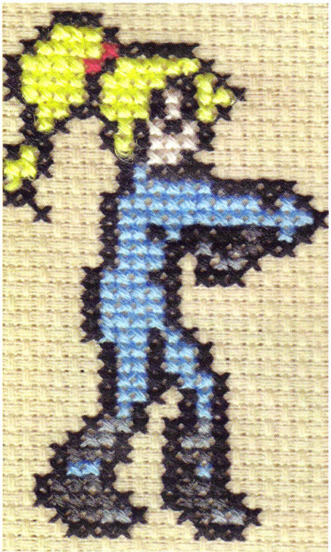
Bates, a 22-year-old writer from Knoxville, Illinois, sent in some of her favorite cross-stitched projects, including numerous Pokémon characters, Princess Toadstool, Chun-Li, and Samus Aran. Brought up in a family of crafters, Bates says she struggled to find a craft that stuck with her until she started cross-stitching about three years ago. "When I first tried cross-stitching, I enjoyed both doing the craft and the final products well enough to keep going with it," she explains.

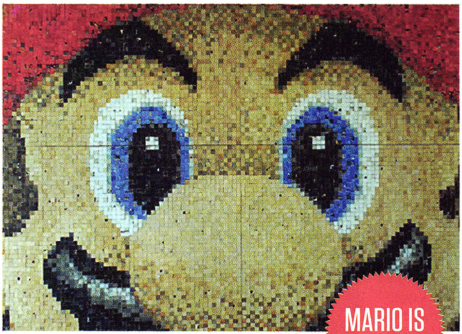
Bates starts with a pattern—some of which are the game's actual graphics and some of which are sprites Bates created herself—and says the scale of the project determines how long it'll take to complete a character. Whereas some of the small characters can be finished in a day or two, she usually works on larger projects for a few days at a time, and then alternates among others until they're finally completed. And though Bates says cross-stitching can be a rather unorganized process, she's been sharing her tips and patterns on her blog, Dork Stitch (dorkstitch.blogspot.com), for fellow crafters to study. **—ANDREW H.**





[Below] Even in cross-stitched form, Zero Suit Samus looks ready to take down some baddies.





MARIO IS A-BOARD!

FANDOM

Skater Mario

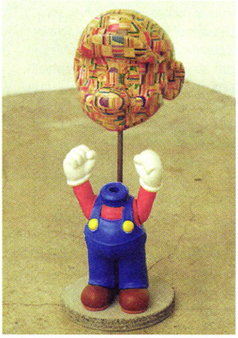
Mario lives on in resurrected skateboards.

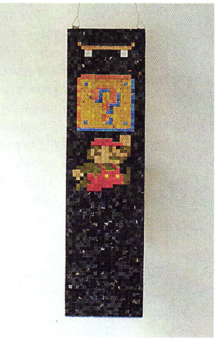
SKATEBOARDERS BREAK A lot of decks over the course of many painful hours spent perfecting their trade and busting out mad tricks, but we've never seen the remains of decks long past put to such great use. Japanese skateboarder and artist Haroshi decided to turn his horde of trashed skateboards into recycled art. He's created many fascinating pieces of art out of smashed skateboards, but this assortment of Mario-themed mosaics is particularly striking.

"Purchasing new decks is a never-ending cycle, and this was evident by the tower of old decks that were reaching to the ceiling of my room," writes Haroshi on his website. "We can't throw away these decks because they hold sentimental meanings to us. I looked at these unusable decks every day and thought there must be something I can make with these."

We can only imagine the time and patience it took to meticulously extract each pixelated tile from the pile of deceased boards and put it into place to create these humorous and spectacular art pieces. But now that we see the possibilities, we think a blend of Super Mario Bros. and Skate or Die might make for a great retro mash-up. —**NATHAN M.**

[Below right] It's a piece of art that's *made* of skateboards about Mario grabbing a power-up that *is* a skateboard—how much more meta can it get?





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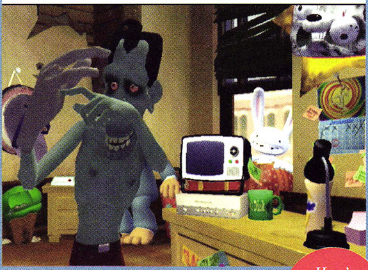
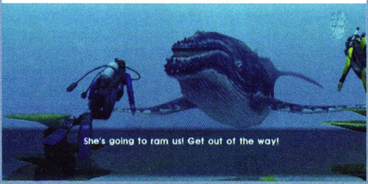
THIS MONTH'S SHOT



Wow! That zombie is a four-time, four-time, four-time, four-time champion!

Here's our caption. THINK YOU CAN DO BETTER?

VOLUME 253'S SHOT



She's going to ram us! Get out of the way!

"Aquaman's diving tours took a turn for the worst when the whale took offense to being called the largest animal on the planet." —**ROBERT M.**

"Just as I realized the whale was smiling, I felt an uncomfortable warmth." —**YIANNI K.**

"Should I *not* have placed those krill in my pockets?" - **RATBOY**

"Just so you know, I'm safely out of the way, at the edge of the screen. The whale is heading in *your* direction." —**FISHERSPOT**

"I'm not gonna ram you! I just wanna see your camera's touch screen!" —**WILL V.**

"I offered to trade you one, but oh no, you just *had* to see a life-sized Wailord!" —**ROLAN THE JUDGEMASTER**

"You may kiss the bride!" —**TEH PWNZOR MATT**

"But she can't do that; her fat lip blocks her view!" —**UNJUSTIFIEDLEAK**

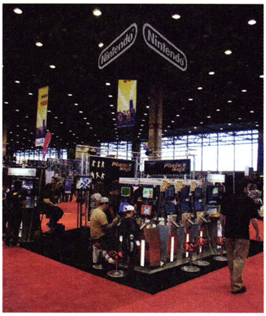
ABOVE *and* BEYOND

Got art, cosplay, case mods, etc.? Send them to us via email to **community@nintendopower.com** or via snail mail to Nintendo Power/Community c/o Future US, 4000 Shoreline Court, STE 400, South San Francisco, CA 94080. We'll print the best stuff!

EVENT

Chicago's Photo Fighters!

Nintendo puts gamers into its digital dojo at the C2E2 convention.

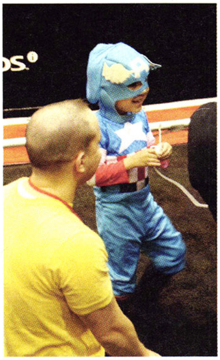


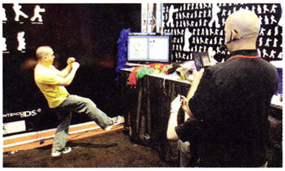
FROM APRIL 16–18, the inaugural Chicago Comic & Entertainment Expo (C2E2) brought the city something it hadn't seen before: a diverse pop-culture expo focused on comic books, movies, anime, television, and video games. More than 27,000 people descended upon the McCormick Place convention center in downtown Chicago for the event, and those who made their way to Nintendo's booth had an opportunity to try out upcoming DSiWare title Photo Dojo, among other titles. Demonstrated weeks before its DSiWare Shop debut, Photo Dojo became the spotlight title at the booth, with several Nintendo representatives on hand to teach attendees about the photo-based brawler and to let them insert themselves into the game.

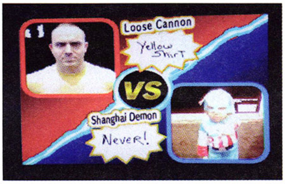
Photo Dojo uses the cameras of the Nintendo DSi system to grab images of the player in various poses, and then lets them add their own sound effects and battle cries via the built-in microphone. A finished fighter can be used to beat down other created warriors, and, according to Michael Chipman, product marketing coordinator for Nintendo of America's localization division, C2E2 attendees were really getting into the experience. "Making the fighter is half the fun," says Chipman, "but once you see your fighter fighting, it's really hilarious. People are having a really good time with it."

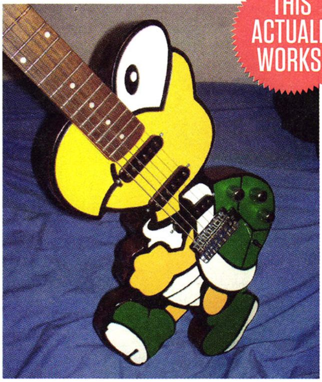
But simply letting attendees create and play as themselves in the game wasn't enough. Nintendo went one step further by filming each player's entire process, then cutting together the clips into a brief video and giving that back to the player on an SD card, free of charge. "Then they can take it home and do whatever they want with it," explains Chipman. "It's a really cool memento."

Dozens of attendees, children and adults alike, took part in the Photo Dojo creation process during the event, including Mike Collofello and his four-year-old nephew, Matthew (shown in the Captain America costume below), who took turns creating their fighters before battling it out against each other on the show floor. The smiles on their faces spoke volumes about the success of Nintendo's C2E2 booth setup, but we still asked Mike to describe his experience. His response? "That was a blast!" **—ANDREW H.**

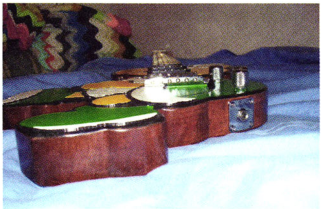








THIS ACTUALLY WORKS!



FANDOM

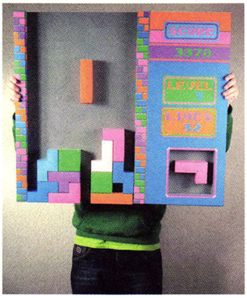
Koopa Rock

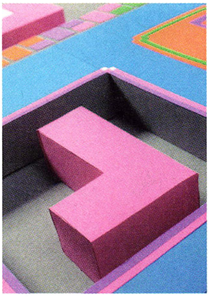
Bowser's minions can shred.

MARIO, LUIGI, AND the gang had better watch out, because this Koopa Troopa is packing some six-string heat. It seems even the smallest of Bowser's minions can dish out a sonic punch. Crafted by an anonymous music enthusiast whose guitar-making skills clearly rival his interest in the Mushroom Kingdom, this fully functional, custom-built electric guitar lets its wielder shred in supergeeky style.

This magnificent rock-'n'-roll specimen surfaced when pictures of it were posted online by a friend of its creator, spurring lots of discussion and speculation about the guitar. This eventually prompted the instrument's creator to weigh in on the conversation, albeit anonymously. "The guitar is right-handed. I play it so the Koopa is on its back (it's been stomped)," he writes. "When it is on a guitar stand, it's walking about. Just pretend Mario jumped on the Koopa Troopa and chose to hold it for too long, so it's escaping."

The sturdy design and polished finish of this awesome Koopa axe has us imagining how cool it would be to see and hear it in action. Maybe fans will build instruments of other Super Mario Bros. characters and form a Mario-themed rock band. We can only hope so. **—NATHAN M.**





FANDOM

Portable Papercraft

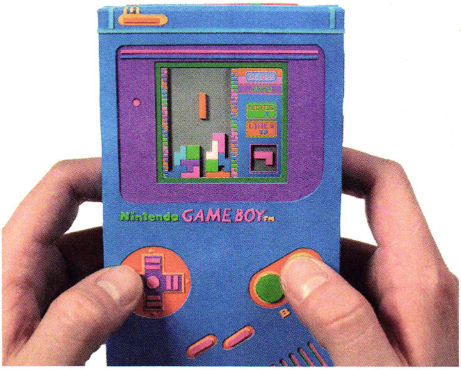
Watch out for paper cuts!

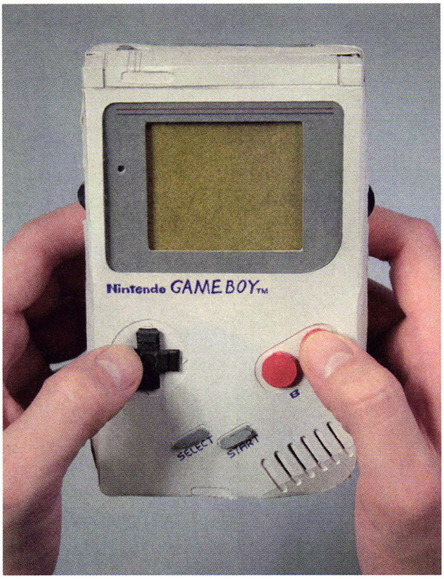
AT FIRST GLANCE, the item pictured to the right simply appears to be an original Game Boy, but a closer look reveals that it's a lovingly crafted papercraft tribute to the device.

This intricate paper project comes to us from Zim & Zou, a freelance art duo of 23-year-olds Thibault Zimmerman and Lucie Thomas. Based in Nancy, France, the pair met in art school and decided to team up upon graduation, creating graphic-design work for both professional clients and personal projects alike.

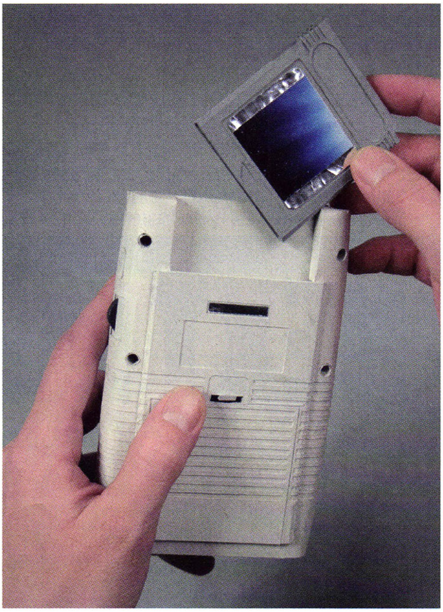
According to Zimmerman, the idea to create a Game Boy out of paper came when he showed his partner the original system, thinking it'd be funny to see her play an older device in public. It led to something else entirely, though. "When I saw this old-school object, I felt like I came back to my childhood," says Thomas. "This nostalgic feeling inspired me a lot, and moreover, as the Game Boy is a kind of legendary item, I found it interesting to honor it with paper."

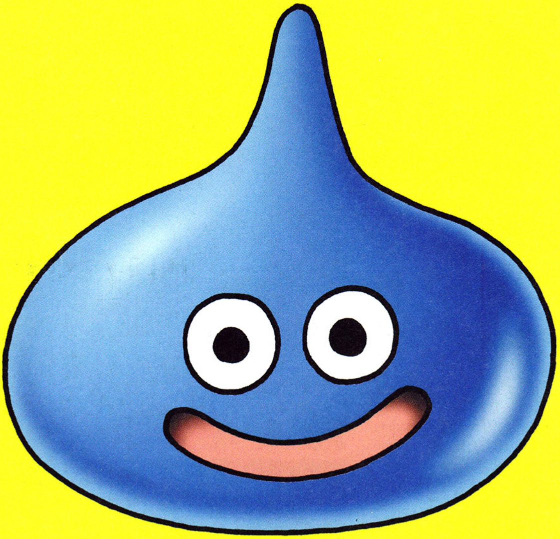
Using the actual system as inspiration, Zim & Zou took about a week to assemble the gray paper Game Boy, but the colored one—which Zimmerman describes as a "funky personal interpretation"—was finished in just two days afterward. Finally, the team created a super-sized version of a Tetris screen, but it won't be the last of their game-related efforts—Zimmerman says other retro-inspired objects are on the way. Might we suggest the Virtual Boy? —**ANDREW H.**





[Above] It may be the right size and shape, but you shouldn't try to play Super Mario Land on this papercraft Game Boy.





A Slime draws near! The Nintendo Power team is gathering its adventuring gear and preparing to embark on the epic multiplayer quest that is Dragon Quest IX: Sentinels of the Starry Skies. Does Slate survive? Does Hoffman hog all the loot? Will the whole NP crew be decimated by Slimes? Check back in 30 for the full report!

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NEXT MONTH

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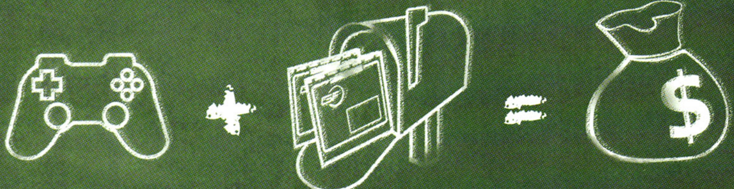

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